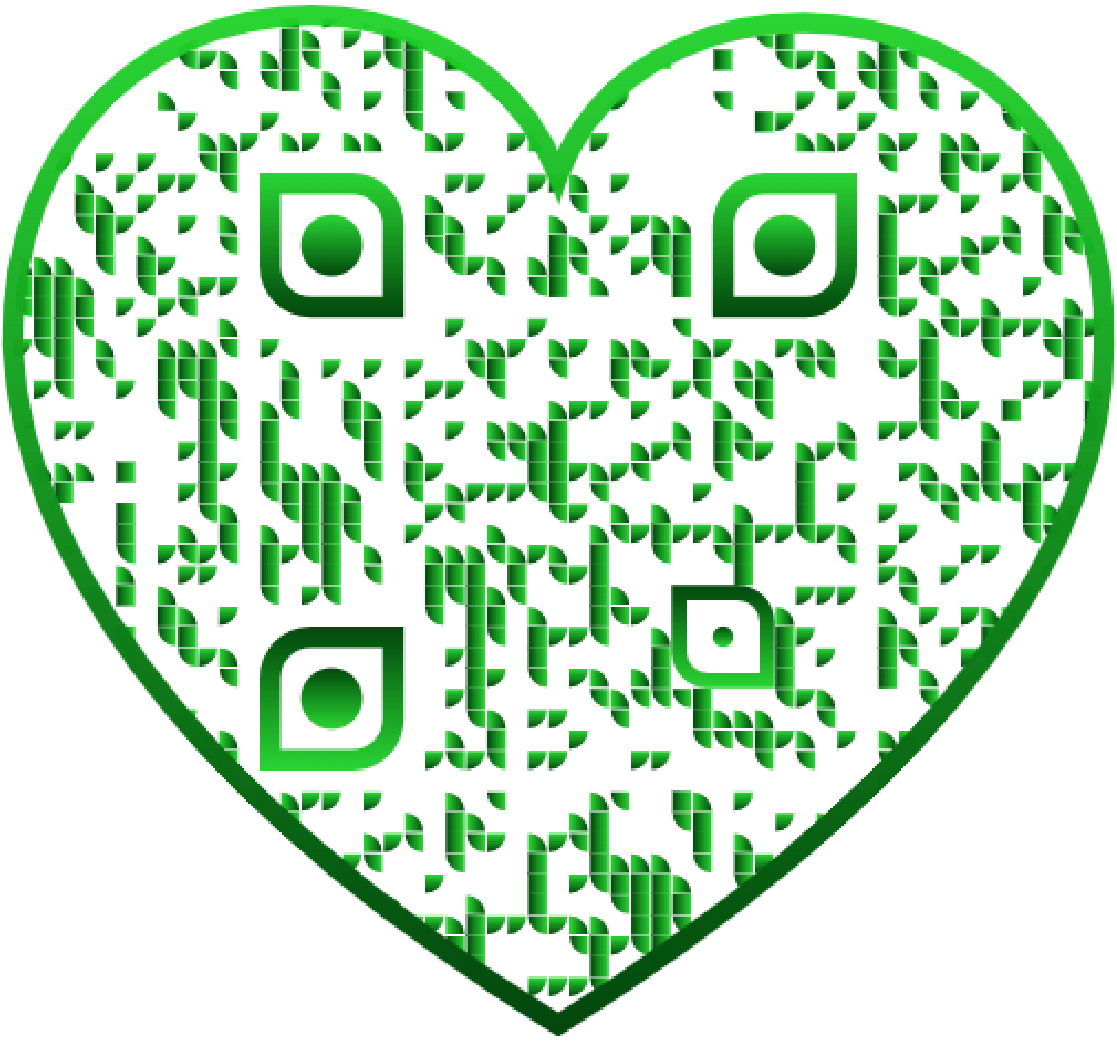
ISSUE #6 2025

ARTDOC

Photography Magazine

PERSPECTIVES ON NATURE



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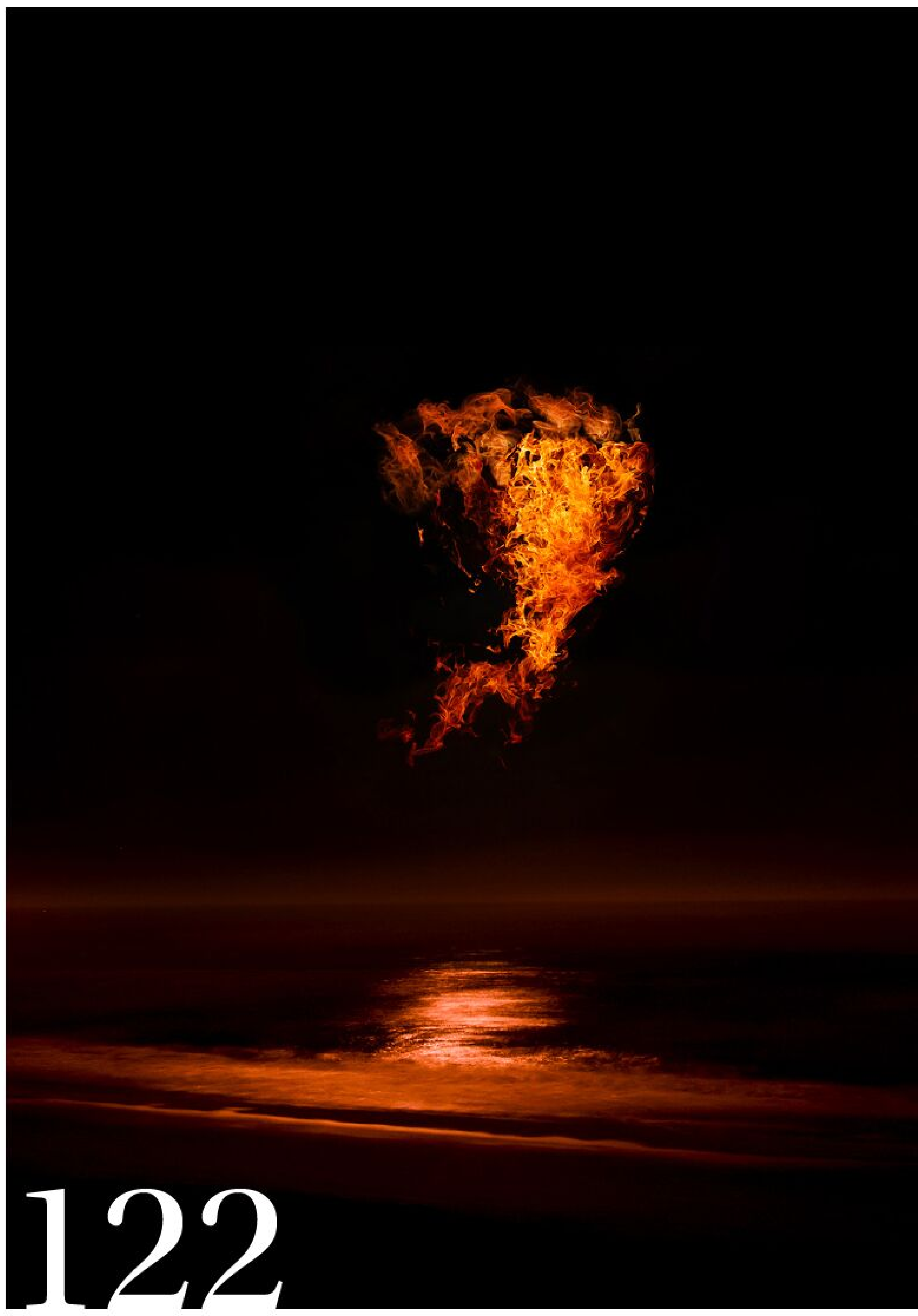

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Visual artists are innate observers of the natural world.

- The Artdoc Team

Perspectives on Nature

Reading its whispering voice

Never before has nature been so fragile as in the Anthropocene. We face a world filled with cataclysmic extremes, torrents, floods, and wildfires. The natural world urges us to observe its inner rhythms, respect its balance, and listen to its whispering voice. Visual artists are innate observers of the natural world.

In this issue of Artdoc, we introduce photographers, the readers of Nature's Voice, showcasing four portfolios that offer their own Perspectives on Nature. Their reflective works about nature restore our inner balance and our sense of connection to the earth's unity.

In *The Material Life of Plants,* Teri Figliuzzi explores photography as a way to preserve the beauty of change during times of upheaval and uncertainty. Through cyanotypes and phytograms, and by working with delicate materials, she emphasises life's ongoing transformation, its beauty, fragility, and subtle shifts.

Tristan Duke uses melting ice as the pencil of nature because he is observing the changing environment with lenses made from ice. His analogue photographs, captured with paper negatives on the Norwegian Arctic island of Svalbard, serve as both a creative and empirical testimony to climate change.

Justin Pumfrey *present*s the series *Walking the Luminous Edge of Darkness,* which he shot during the dark hours. His poetic work is not conceptual but an awareness without labels, a state of mind before language intrudes, like images in a dream.

Tsung-yu Lu's abstract photography combines scientific thought with artistic drive. While pushing the limits of image creation, even utilising generative art, he questions the true nature of photography.

We feature Laura Piek with her work *The Way Home*, in which she uses flowers as symbols of healing and renewal. With *Life of the Land*, Leslie Gleim depicts ancient lava flows and fissures photographed from a helicopter on Hawai'i Island. Xavier Manrique's *Antany* is an atmospheric and emotional exploration of an imagined landscape, created through solitary walks in foggy forests and along silent rivers. In *Disorder*, Jeremy Blair works with a self-built darkroom, creating abstract photograms from natural materials, shaped by shifting environmental conditions.

Don't forget to read our insightful essay, *Blueprints, Botanicals, and the Contemporary Cyanotype.* In this essay, we trace the cyanotype's journey from a nineteenth-century scientific tool to a contemporary photographic language, revealing a profound shift in how the blue images are created and understood.

- The Artdoc Team

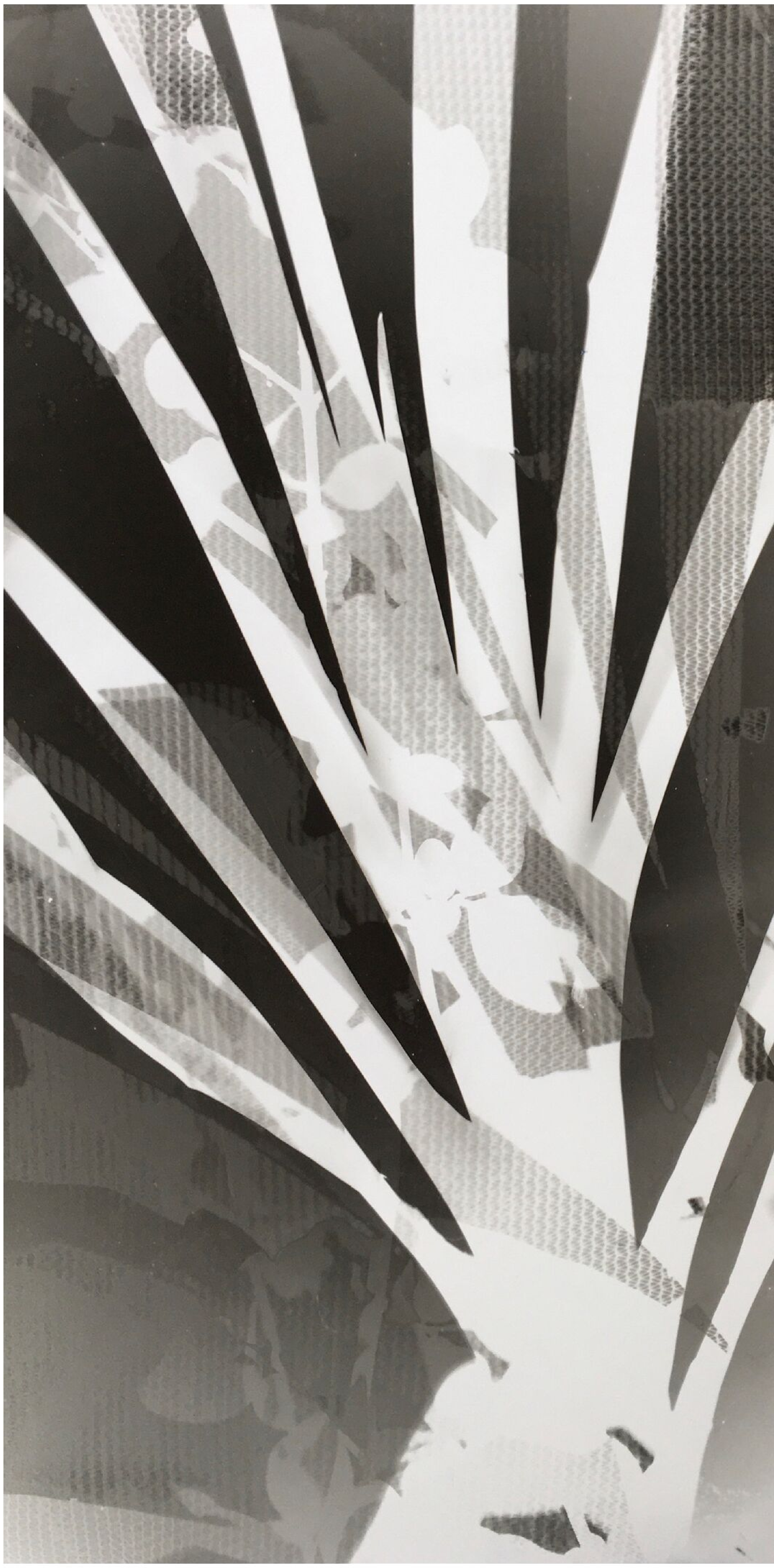
Disorder

Jeremy Blair

Cameraless photography serves as a tool for close observation here, enabling place, process, and personal experience to merge. In *Disorder,* Jeremy Blair works outdoors with a self-constructed darkroom, creating photograms from found natural materials shaped by light, chemistry, and shifting environmental conditions. Each image is developed on site, bearing the imprint of specific locations and moments. The works function as silent records of encounter, where ecological systems and internal rhythms mirror each other through material and light.

© Jeremy Blair | Disorder

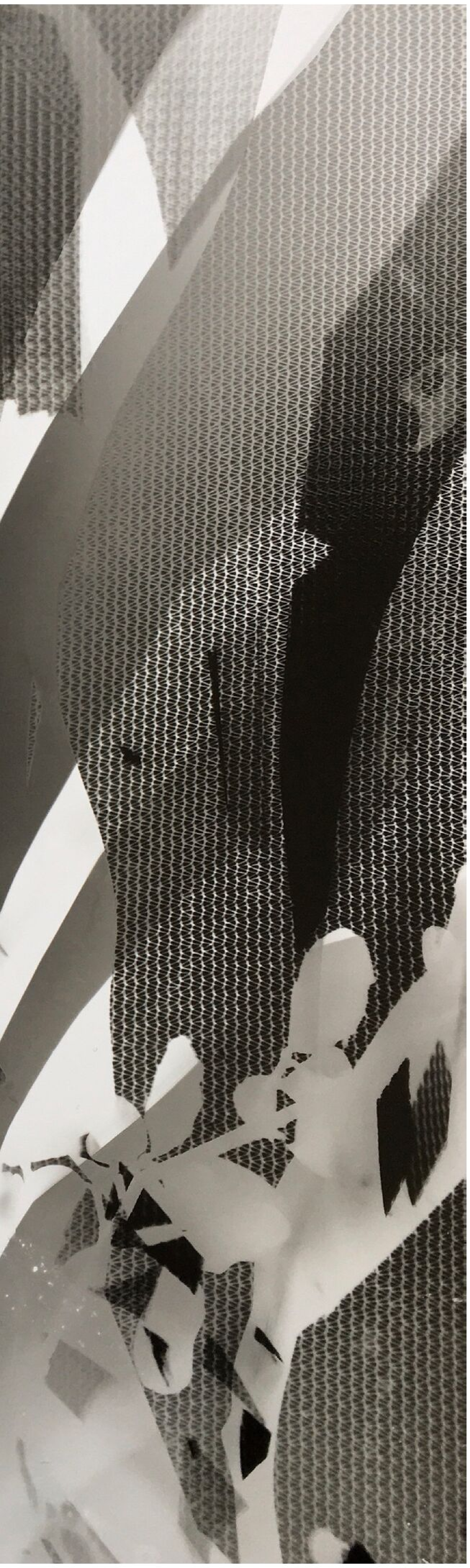
> I create cameraless photograms and photo collages that explore the intersections of place and self by transforming found materials into personal narratives. Working outdoors in rural settings, I use a custom-designed, light-proof darkroom tent. I begin each photogram by arranging found objects from nature on photosensitive paper, then expose the composition with quick flashes of light from a small torch, altering it with each exposure. The paper is then processed in the field using eco-friendly chemicals to reveal the final image. Developing photograms on site embraces environmental variables such as humidity, temperature, water quality, and sunlight, adding unique effects to each piece. This process allows me to draw, collage, and paint with light, uncovering patterns in nature that mirror patterns within myself. Each photogram becomes a portal to places I have visited, crystallising the people and materials I have encountered. My work documents vital ecologies through light and chemistry, fostering an intimate connection with place, material, and self.

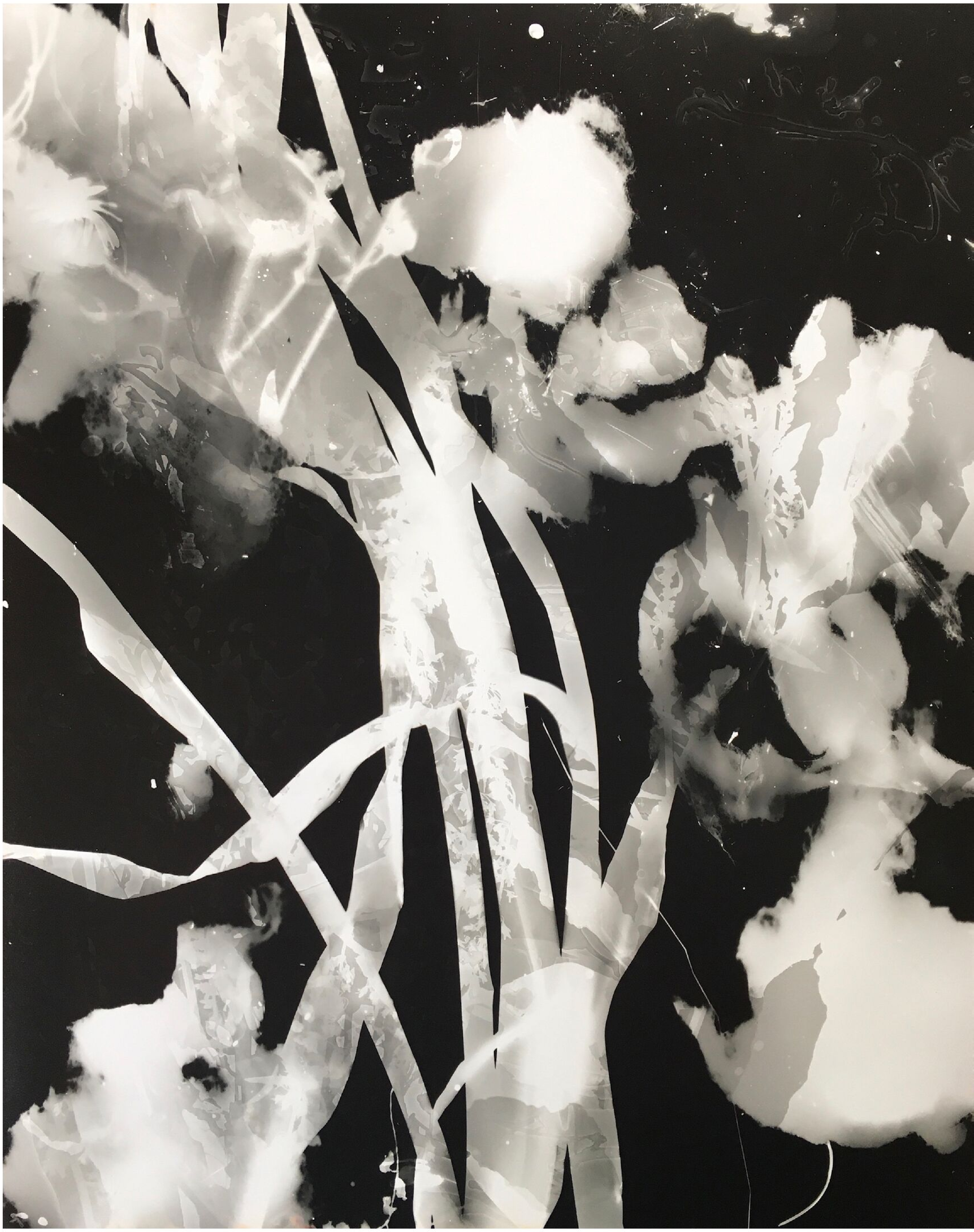


About

Jeremy Blair is an Associate Professor of Art Education at Tennessee Tech University. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Miami University and his doctorate from the University of North Texas. Blair began his career as a K–12 visual arts teacher in Savannah, Georgia. Before joining Tennessee Tech, he was a visiting professor at the University of Georgia and a curator at the University of Colorado. His creative practice, teaching, and scholarship centre on exploring intersections between art and science, particularly nature, chemistry, and light through photography. He resides in Sparta, Tennessee.

www.blairarted.com





All images © Jeremy Blair | Disorder

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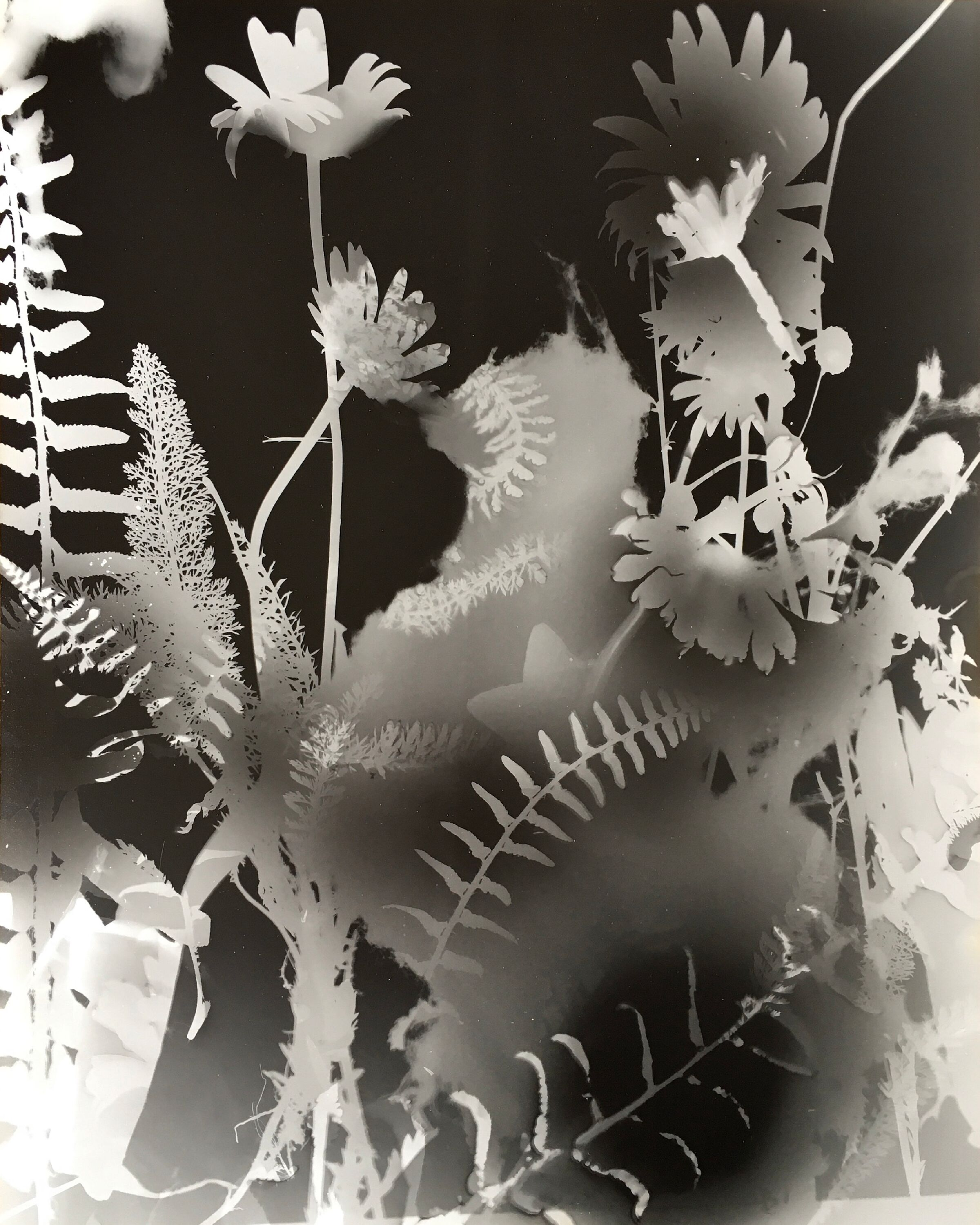
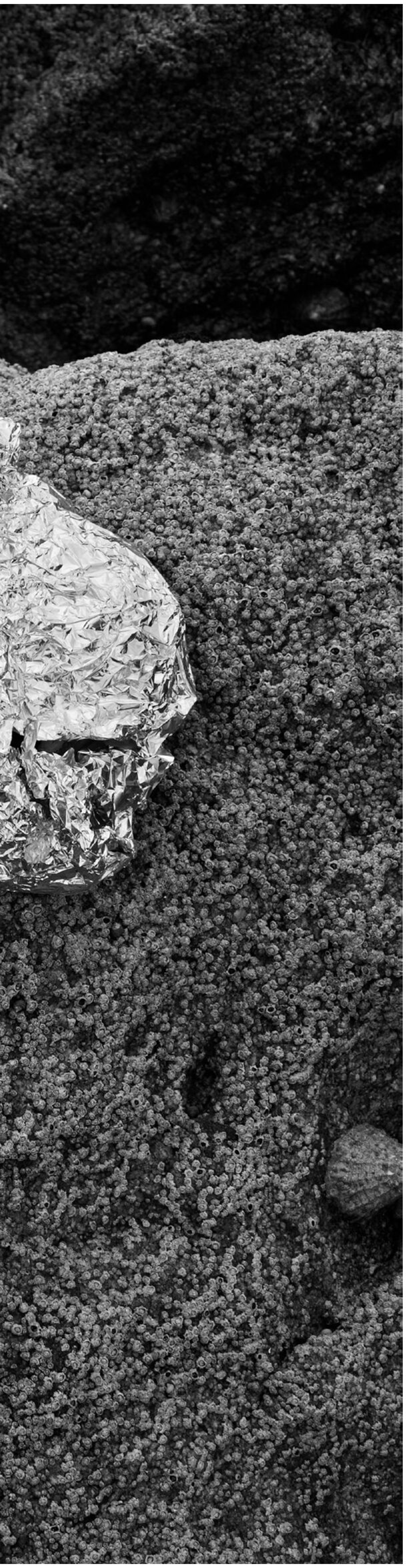
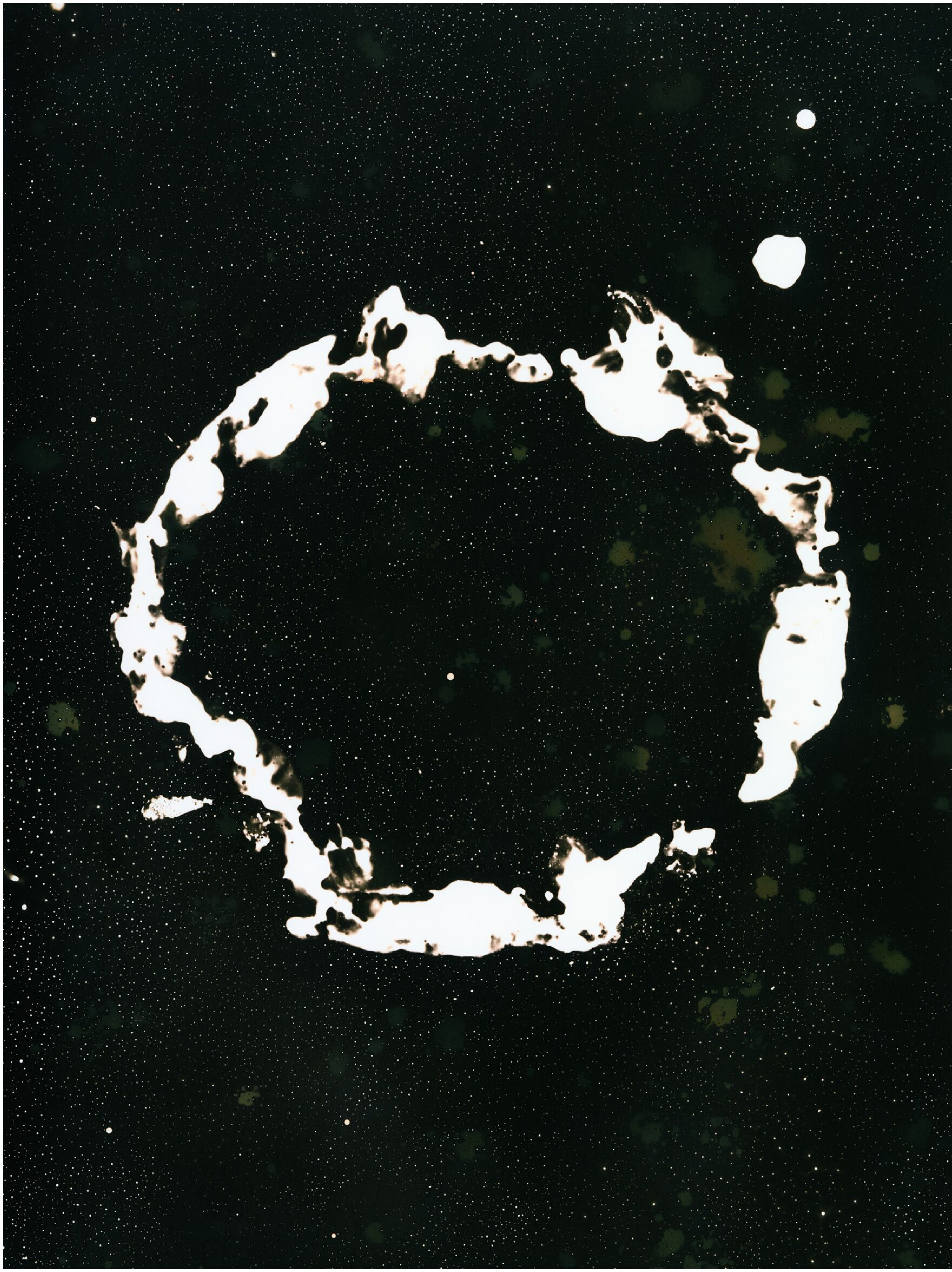


Intertidal

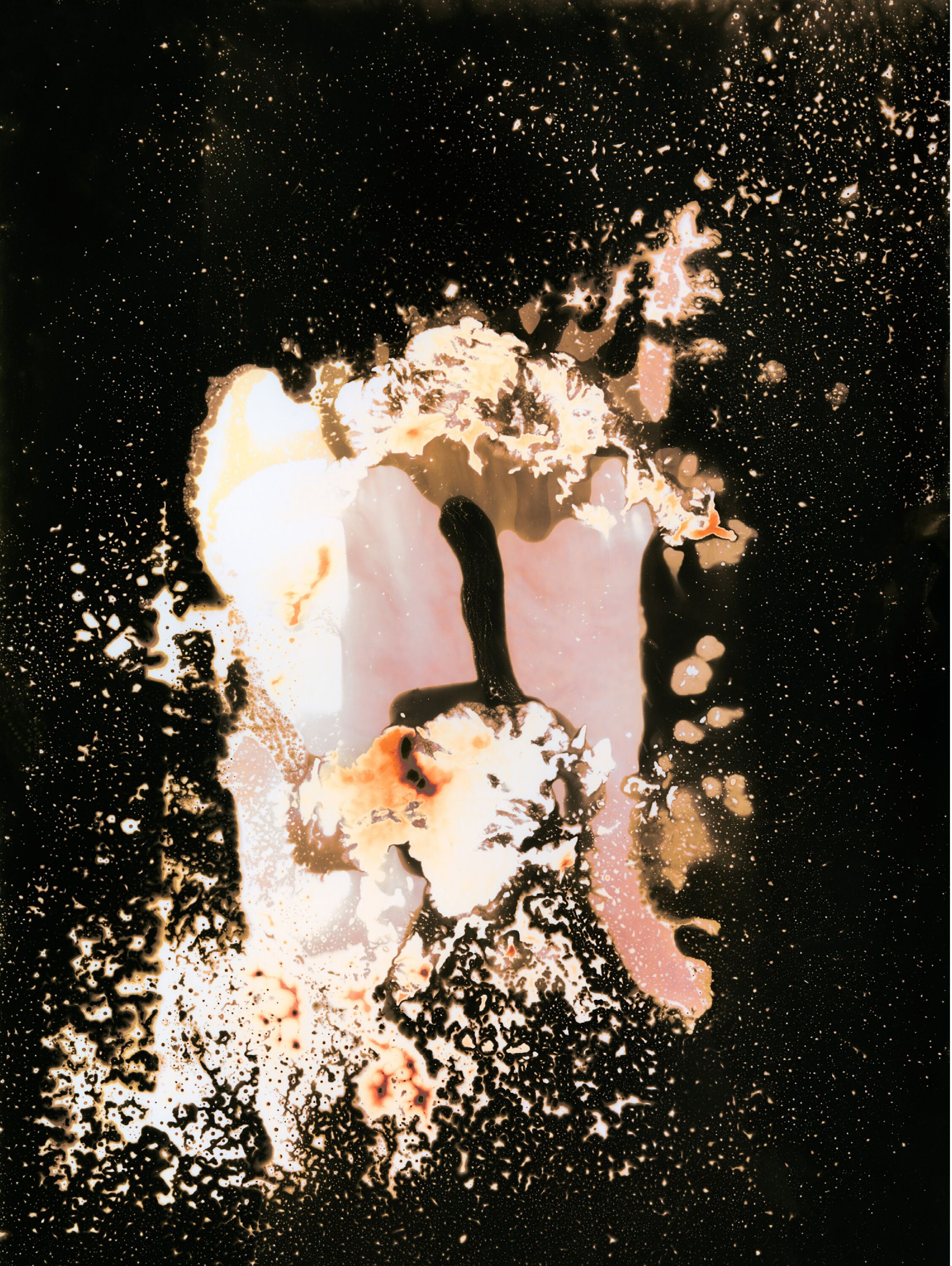
Mélodie Roulaud

“*Intertidal* explores the relationship between humans and nature within the intertidal zone of Sillon Beach (Saint-Malo), where Europe’s largest tidal range, governed by the gravitational pull of the Moon and Sun, creates a cycle that shapes both the landscape and human activity. I examine how we might shift from viewing nature as something to manage towards recognising our fundamental interdependence with it. The project employs a dual approach: documentary photographs capture human activity on the foreshore, accompanied by testimonies from visitors. Bodies move according to ancestral patterns—collecting shells, searching tide pools—revealing our connection to cosmic rhythms. In contrast, experimental chemigrams and photograms invite natural elements—sand, seaweed and seawater—as co-creators. These materials interact directly with photographic emulsion, generating their own “self-portraits” and reversing the traditional observer-observed relationship, embodying the reciprocity at the heart of the work. As Saint-Malo faces rising seas, this project offers a contemplative meditation on adaptation and our belonging to cycles of nature.





All Images © Mélodie Roulaud | Intertidal

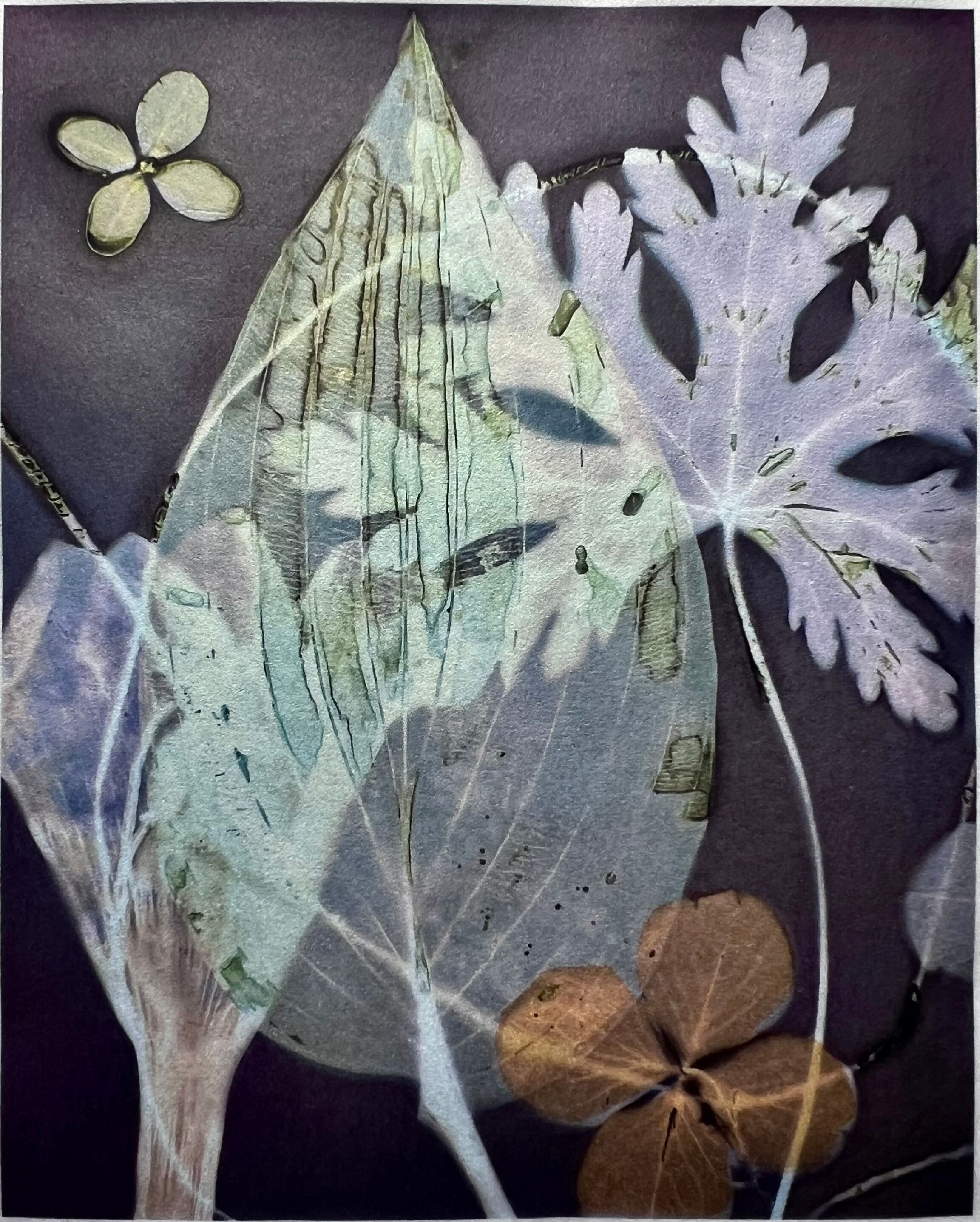


All Images © Mélodie Roulaud | Intertidal

About

Franco-British photographer and filmmaker Mélodie Roulaud explores lived bodily experience, identity, and modes of representation. Her research examines how imagery shapes self-perception and our presence in the world. Her collaborative approach blurs boundaries between author and subject, placing the body and sensory experience at the centre to create dialogue between individual and collective experiences. Trained in literature at the Université du Maine and in photography at UAL, she began her career as a producer before moving behind the camera. Based in London, she teaches at the London College of Fashion and Central Saint Martins while pursuing her artistic practice. The series *Intertidal* will be exhibited at Photoforum in Switzerland (December 2025–February 2026) as part of the Photoforum Prix, and at Festival Impulse in Arles (March–June 2026).

www.iammelo.studio



The Material Life of Plants

Teri Figliuzzi

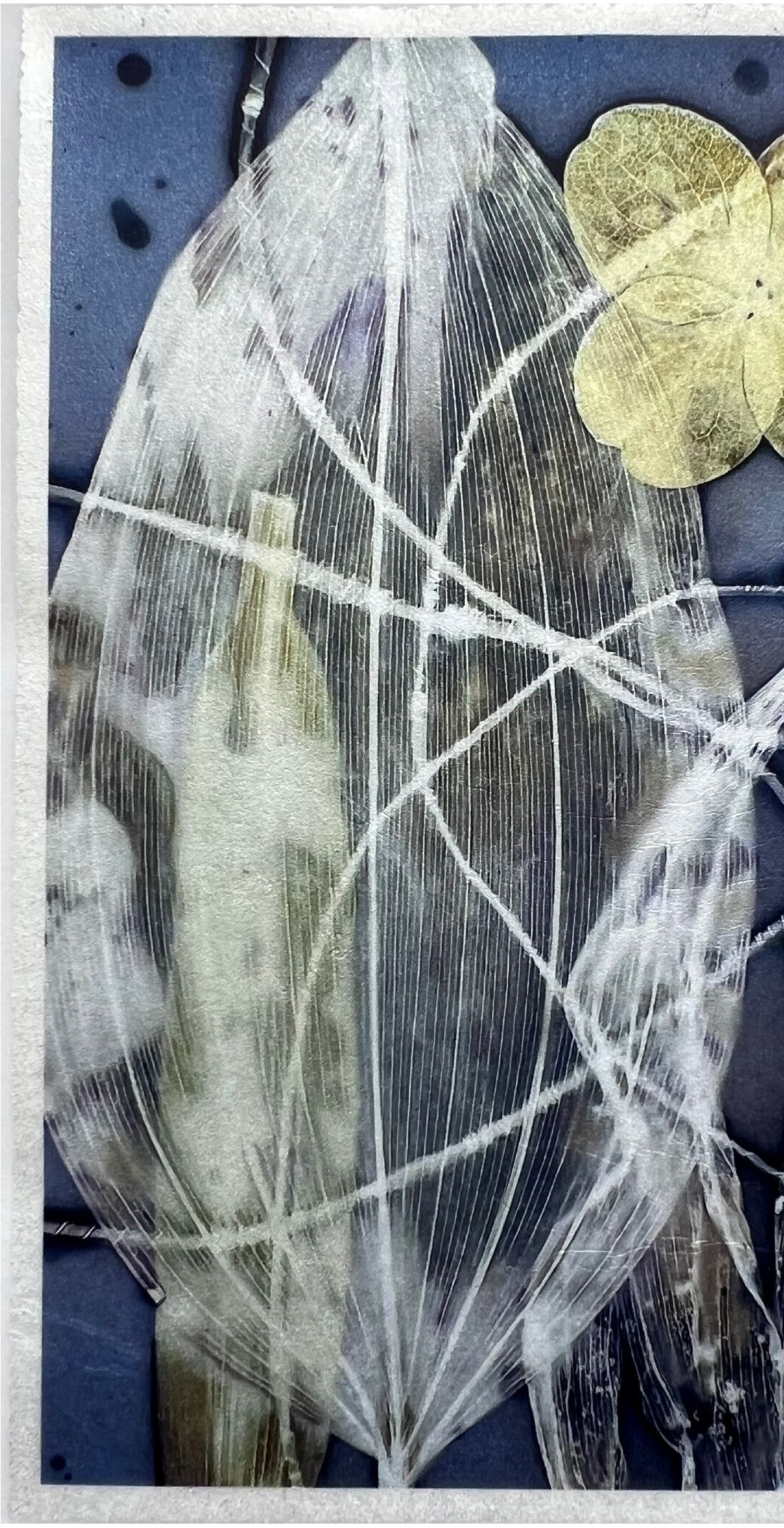
Teri Figliuzzi's photographic practice is grounded in attentiveness, care, and material intimacy. Working primarily with botanicals and alternative photographic processes, she approaches photography as an act of gathering, preservation, and sustained looking. Her images do not seek to arrest time but to remain with it, allowing growth, decay, and renewal to remain visible within the frame. Rooted in personal experience and shaped by a lifelong relationship with the natural world, her work reflects on impermanence, resilience, and the beauty embedded in transition. Through cyanotypes, lumens, phytograms, and tactile interventions, Figliuzzi creates images that function as visual pauses, inviting viewers to reconsider how value, beauty, and meaning persist across every stage of life. By working with materials that are themselves vulnerable, she draws attention to states often overlooked. “The central message in my work is a focus on life's continual transformation, its beauty, fragility, and subtle transitions.”

© Figliuzzi Teri | Proceed - Gathering Onward

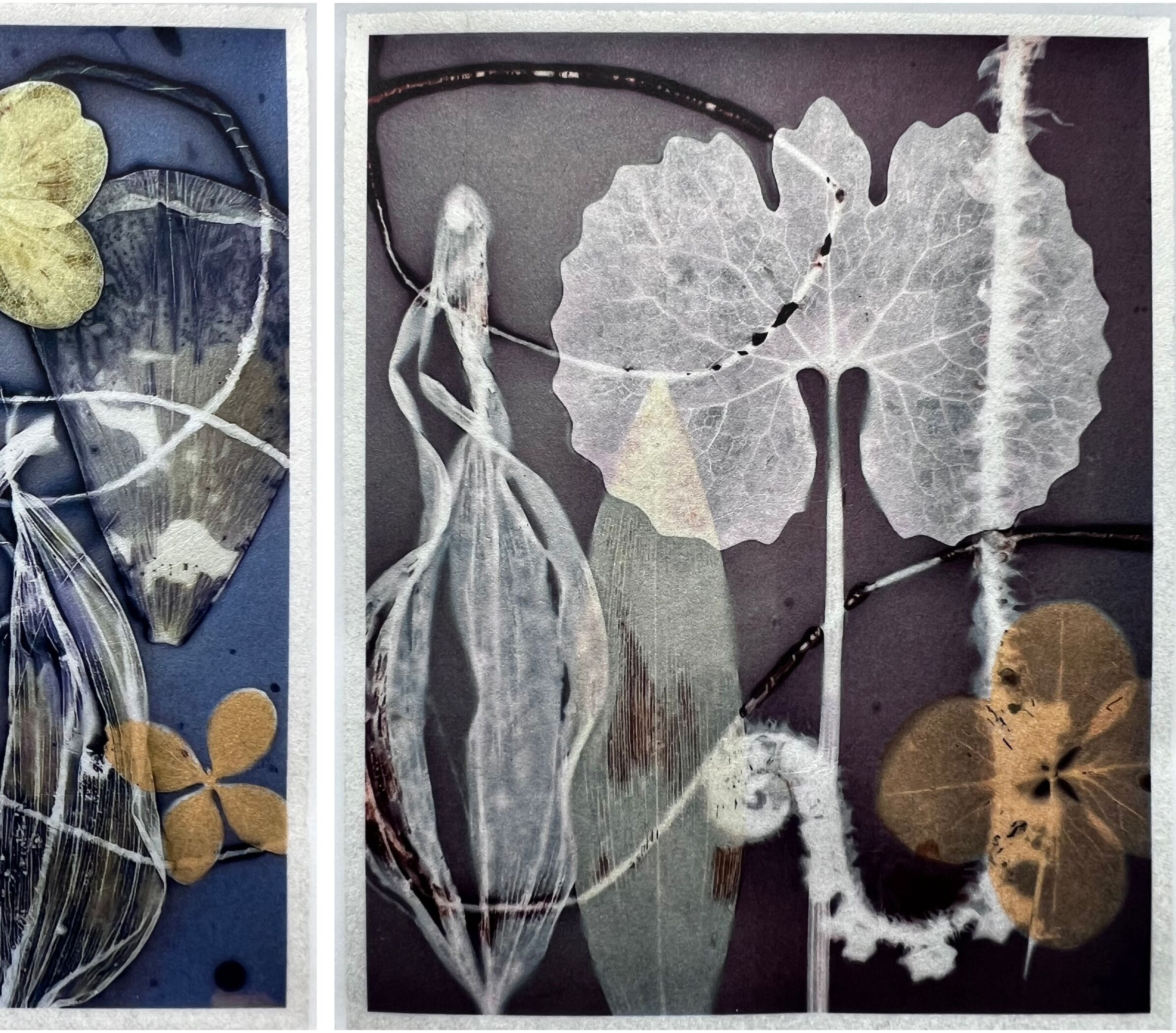
Figliuzzi's work is guided by a belief that significance does not reside solely in moments of arrival or perfection. "At the heart of my work is the belief that every stage of life holds beauty, meaning, and purpose." Her attraction to botanical material emerges from this awareness of time and transition. "I am drawn to nature's cycles of growth, decay, and rebirth, and how these rhythms mirror our own lives. Each botanical fragment I gather carries its own story, shaped by time, weather, and circumstance."

Alternative photographic processes allow these traces of life to remain visible, preserving evidence of fragility alongside endurance. "Through alternative photographic processes, I try to honour these stages and highlight their inherent fragility and strength. These themes matter to me because nature has always offered solace, a reminder to pause, breathe, and begin again. By working with organic materials, I not only preserve moments of quiet beauty but also celebrate the resilience found in even the most delicate forms. My hope is that this attention to life's transitions will resonate with others and encourage a deeper appreciation for impermanence and renewal."

Figliuzzi does not prescribe how her work should be received, but she hopes it creates space for attention. "I hope my work encourages viewers to slow down, take a breath, and truly look. In a world that moves quickly, nature offers a counterpoint and a reminder that growth, renewal, and healing all take time." By foregrounding intricate structures, transparencies, and transformations within botanicals, she invites viewers to notice details that might otherwise pass unnoticed.



© Figliuzzi Teri | Mend - Gathering Onward



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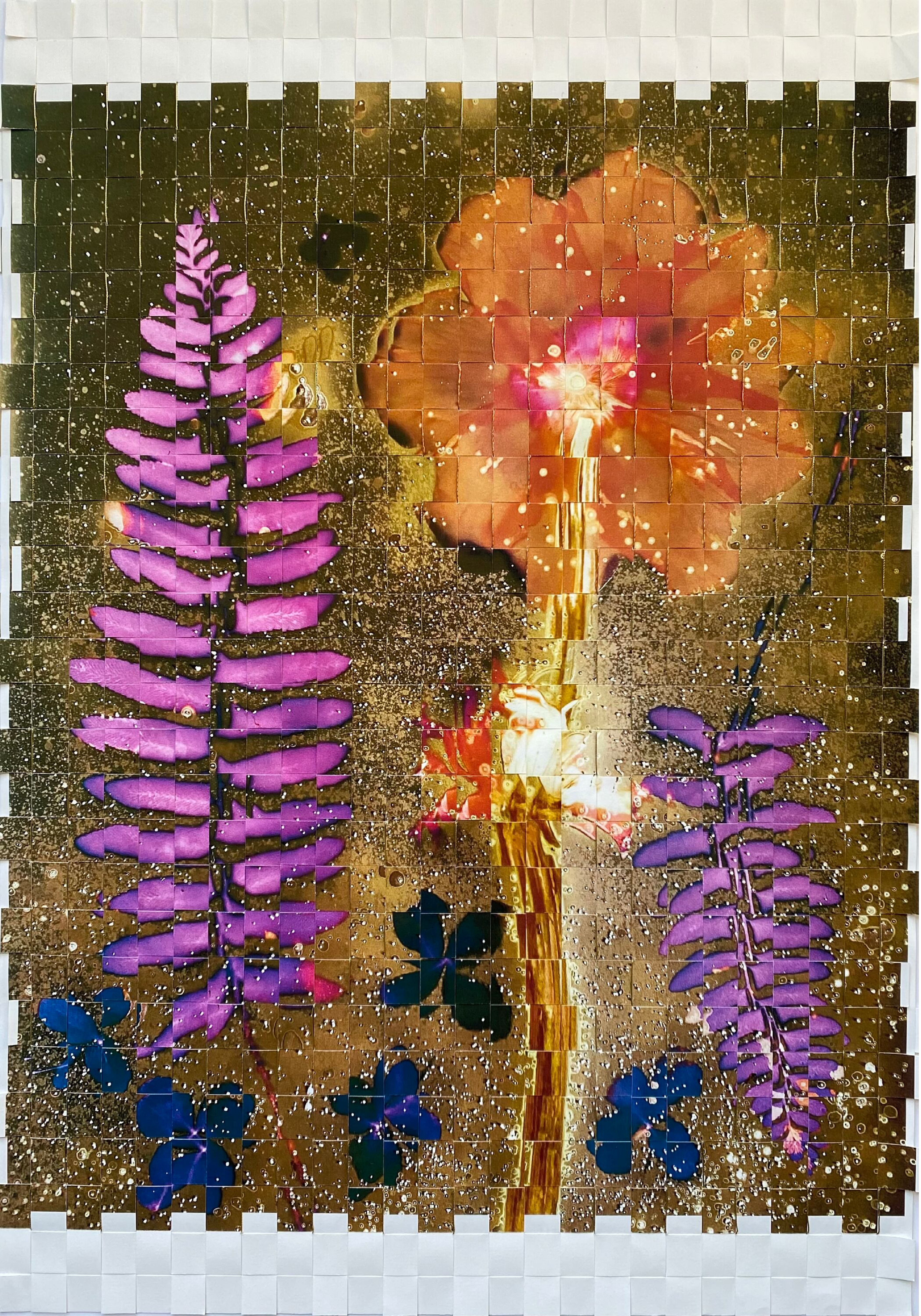


© Figliuzzi Teri | Anemone - Gathering Light

The work of detail

Subject selection unfolds slowly, guided by intuition rather than intent. What holds Figliuzzi's attention are forms that carry both individuality and continuity within broader cycles of growth. This attentiveness extends beyond outdoor spaces into the domestic sphere. "My subjects are collected slowly, intuitively, and often during long walks through fields, forests, or my own garden. I am an obsessive gatherer by nature, always noticing small gestures of movement, an unusual curve in a leaf, a twist in a stem, a delicate seedpod on the verge of dispersal. Whether I find botanicals outdoors or in bouquets at home, I study them for their character and quiet expressiveness."

Narrative enters the work obliquely, shaped through material relationships rather than linear storytelling. "These details become the foundation of the stories I build within my cyanotypes, lumens, and phytograms. Storytelling emerges not through a literal narrative, but through the way each plant fragment interacts with light, texture, and composition. Together, they create a visual record of a moment that would otherwise disappear. Each piece becomes a small memory of place, season, and emotion, preserving a fleeting encounter with nature."

Details are presented as evidence of endurance rather than novelty. "I hope they find comfort in the resilience of plants and feel strengthened by their ability to endure each season's challenges and return again." Underlying this approach is a challenge to narrow definitions of beauty. "Ultimately, I want viewers to recognise that beauty exists at every stage of life, not just at its peak." The response she seeks is not admiration but recognition. "If my work helps someone feel grounded, reassured, or more connected to themselves and the natural world, then it has achieved its purpose."

Nature as a refuge

Figliuzzi's relationship with the natural world is longstanding and deeply personal. From childhood onward, walking, collecting, and observing have provided continuity during periods of uncertainty. "Nature has always been my refuge. From childhood onward, I have found peace in walking, collecting, and observing the natural world. In times of turmoil or uncertainty, turning to nature grounds me and restores a sense of inner calm."

This grounding presence shapes the emotional register of her work, directing it away from confrontation and toward affirmation. Over time, her sensitivity to life cycles has deepened. "As I age, I've become increasingly aware of the parallels between plant life cycles and our own, as each stage is unique, purposeful, and beautiful in its own way. This realisation influences how I approach each piece, infusing the work with gentleness, gratitude, and acceptance. My art becomes both a meditation and an offering, inviting viewers into the same sense of reflection and peace that nature gives to me."

Ephemeral nature of existence

Preservation becomes an ethical gesture rather than a technical one. The work lingers on moments that rarely command attention. “Rather than addressing a specific issue, my photographs serve as quiet meditations on the ephemeral nature of existence. By preserving delicate botanicals through alternative processes, I aim to honour both their vulnerability and resilience.”

Through this lens, fragility is not diminished but reframed. “Each piece becomes a reminder that moments of grace often exist in the in-between spaces: the fading of a petal, the curling of a leaf, the translucence of something on the verge of change.” She intends to encourage viewers to recognise that vulnerability does not diminish beauty but often deepens it.

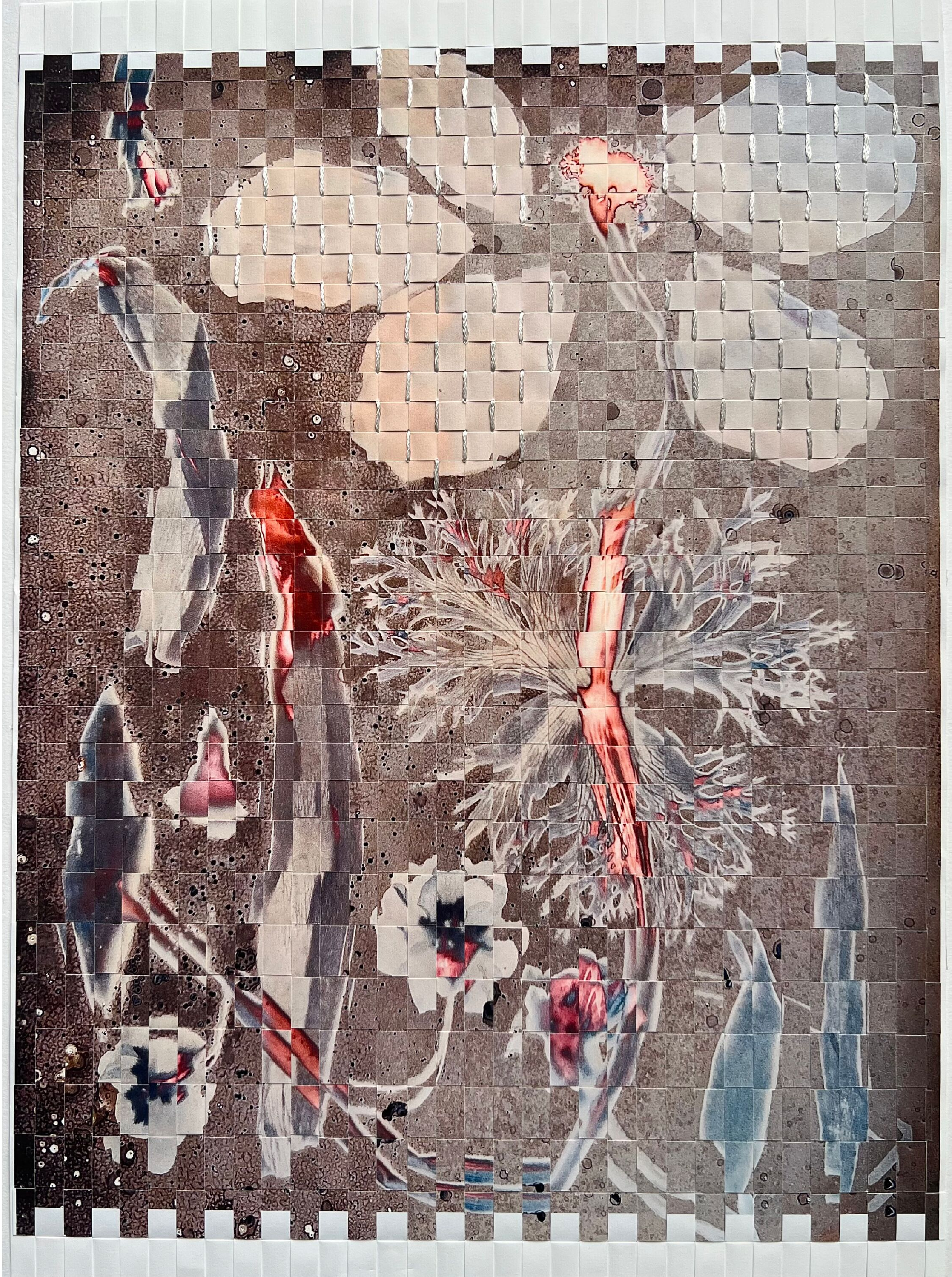
Rather than relying on symbolic motifs, Figliuzzi repeatedly returns to forms marked by use and exposure. “I am consistently drawn to imperfect botanicals, those with bends, tears, curves, or signs of weathering.” These forms carry visible histories, embodying natural imperfection as a quiet strength.

Nature as a universal language

While not overtly political, Figliuzzi acknowledges the connective capacity of nature. “I believe nature offers a universal language, one that transcends culture, geography, and circumstance.” In a period marked by fragmentation, shared encounters with organic forms create points of contact. Her images function as invitations rather than arguments. “My photographs invite viewers into a space of contemplation and connection, reminding us of what we hold in common: a need for beauty, peace, and belonging.” By focusing on organic forms and life cycles, the work encourages reflection on mindfulness, sustainability, and care. “I hope that by highlighting the quiet resilience of botanicals, my work fosters a sense of unity and underscores the idea that all living things are interconnected.”

By choosing such subjects, Figliuzzi challenges cultural associations between beauty and flawlessness. “By choosing plants that show evidence of their journey, I aim to celebrate the honesty of natural imperfection and challenge the idea that beauty is tied only to youth or flawlessness.” These recurring forms operate as understated affirmations of endurance, vulnerability, and change.

> “By preserving delicate botanicals through alternative processes, I aim to honour both their vulnerability and resilience.



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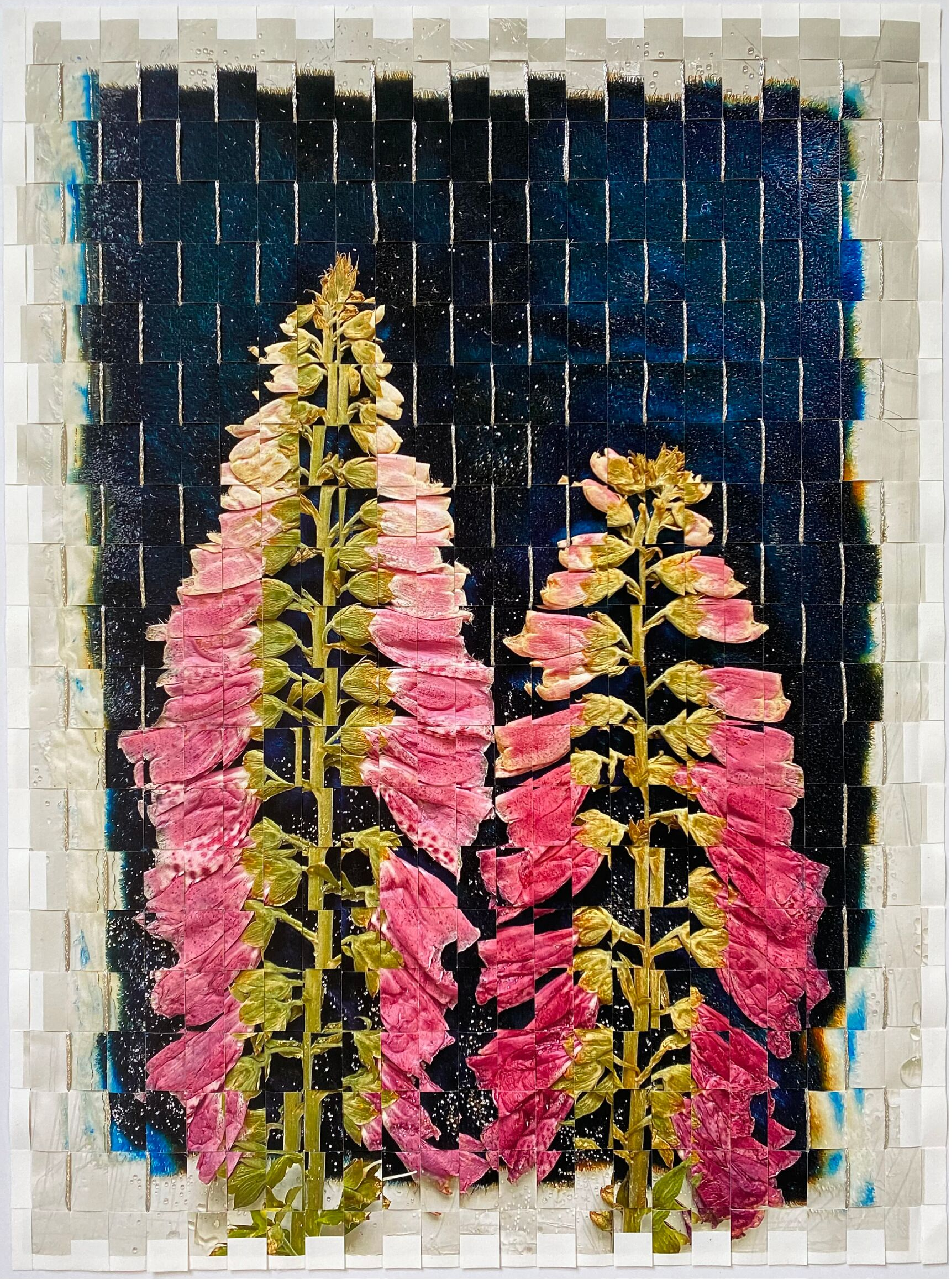

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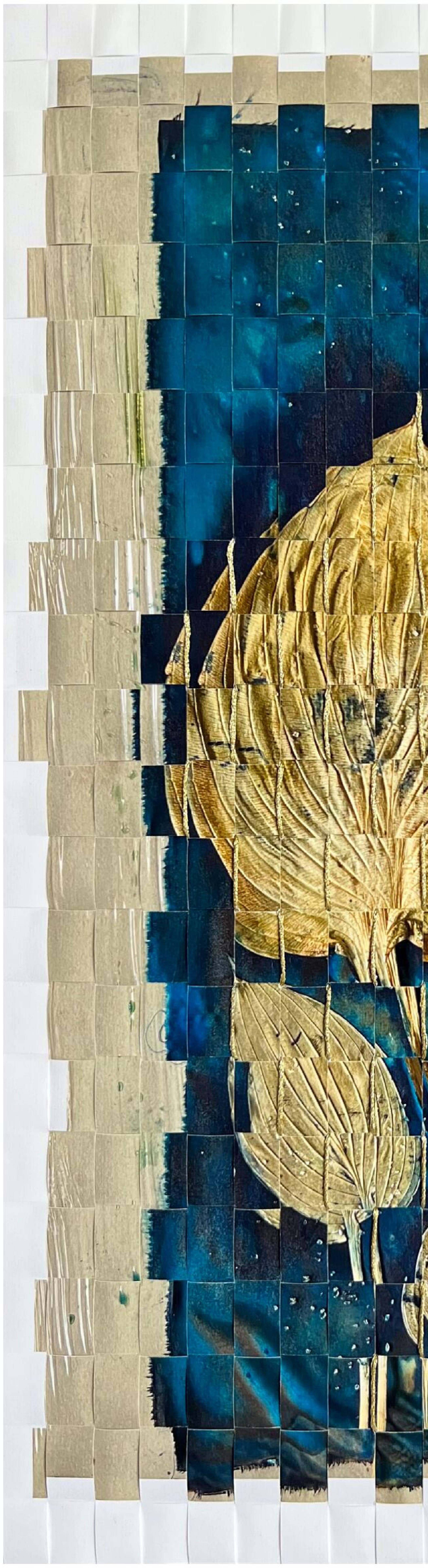
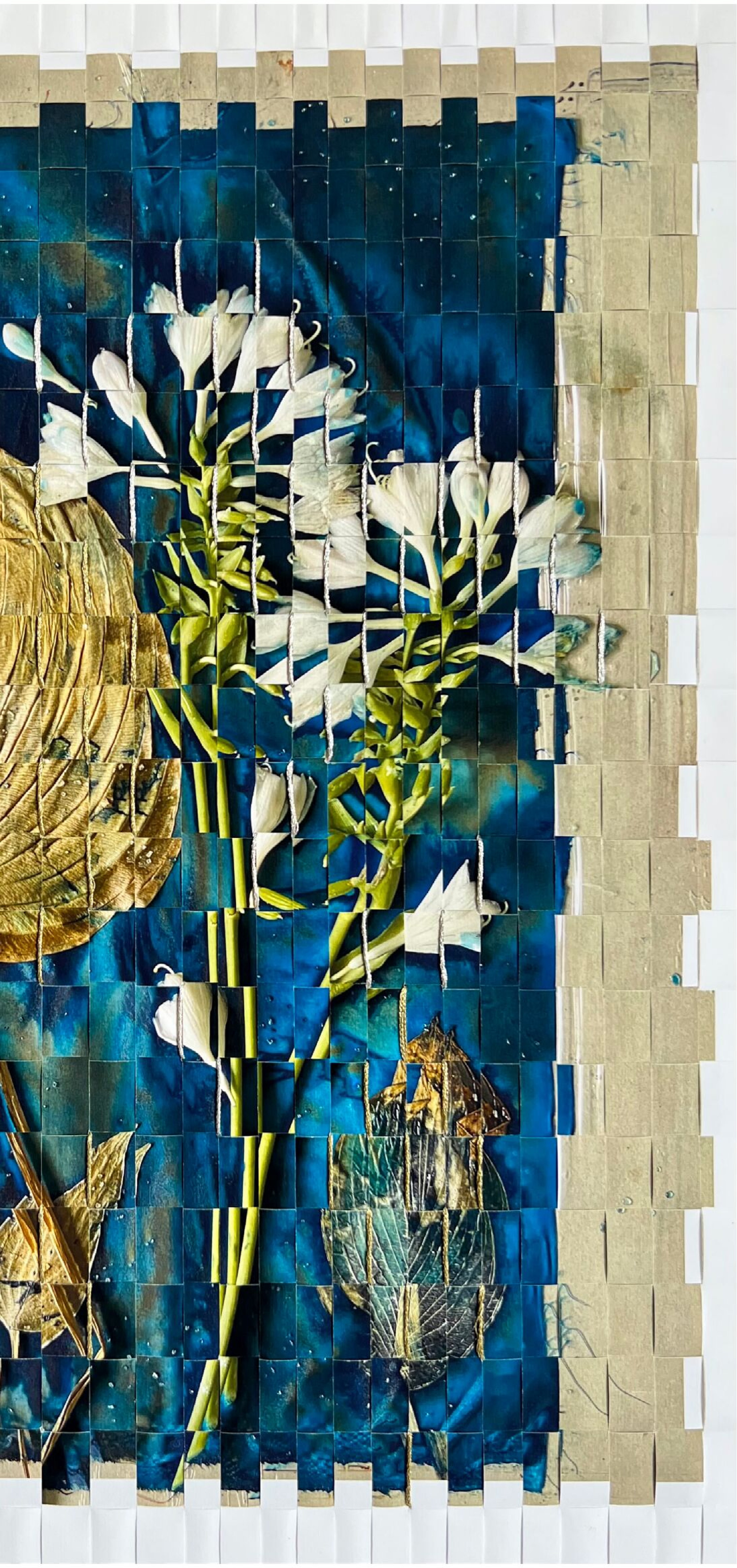




© Figliuzzi Teri | Hosta - Gathering Blue

Experiment beyond composition

Figliuzzi's technical processes are inseparable from her conceptual concerns. "My cyanotypes, lumens, and phytogram processes are deeply dependent on sunlight, making the act of creation a collaboration with the natural world." Composition is approached with restraint and deliberation. "I begin by laying out my gathered botanicals and arranging them until they strike a balance of movement, delicacy, and visual harmony."

Light functions not simply as illumination but as an active variable, shaping each outcome through exposure, weather, and time. "Cyanotypes in my *Gathering Blue* series offer vivid, true-to-life tones, while lumen prints in *Gathering Light* rely on variables such as paper type, weather conditions, and exposure time, resulting in rich, unpredictable colours."

Each process carries distinct tonal and material qualities, from the saturated blues of cyanotypes to the unpredictability of lumens and the earthy browns of phytograms. "Phytograms, processed with a plant-based developer on film, result in shades of browns and require the most manipulation. I carefully cool the palette of the image, print onto vellum, and enhance the structure of the plants with silver or gold leaf applied to the reverse side."

Her experimental interventions extend beyond composition and exposure. "The weaving, stitching, and threads used in creating the cyanotypes and lumens, and the metallic leafing of the phytograms, all serve as a way to honour the botanicals, as if crowning them with jewels." These gestures underscore fragility while reinforcing a sense of care.

Expanding terrain

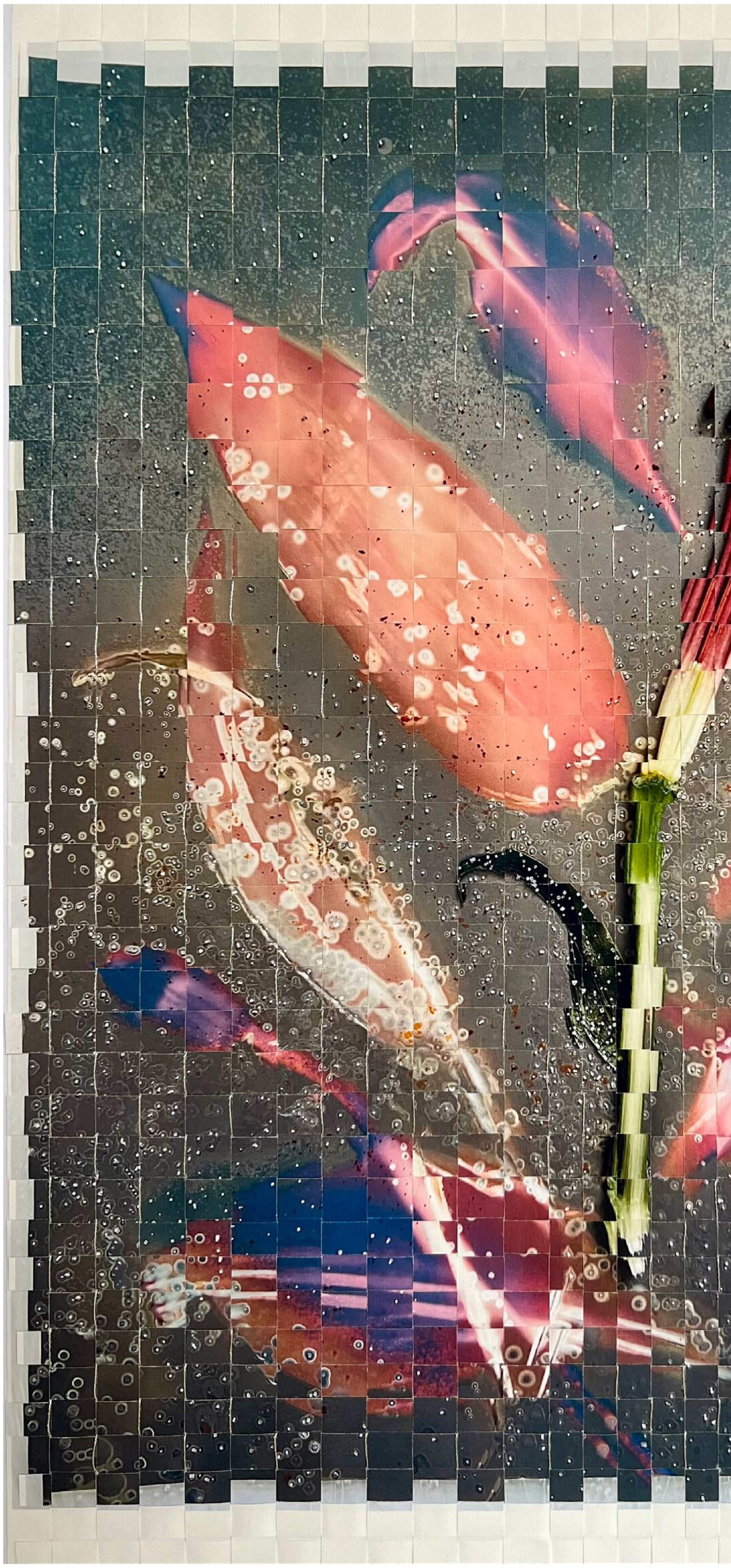
Looking ahead, Figliuzzi sees her practice continuing to evolve while remaining anchored in its concerns. “While botanicals will likely always remain central to my practice, I am increasingly interested in expanding how I interpret landscape and place.” Recent work with black-and-white digital images captured during snowfall extends her material sensitivity into new contexts. Her interest in unpredictability continues through analogue experimentation. “I also began experimenting with the Holga camera and square format film during the summer, embracing the softness and unpredictability of that process.” These explorations signal expansion rather than departure.

As her practice moves forward, Figliuzzi remains committed to blending alternative techniques with tactile materials. “Moving forward, I’m excited to further blend alternative techniques with new materials, continuing to explore themes of memory, transience, and the intimate dialogue between humans and the natural world.”

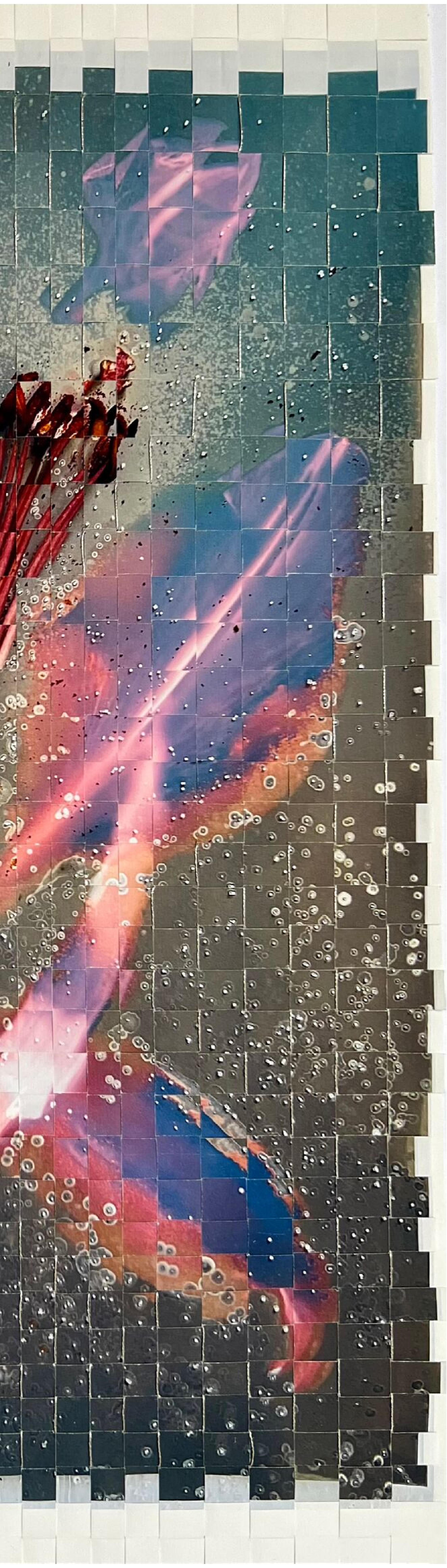
About

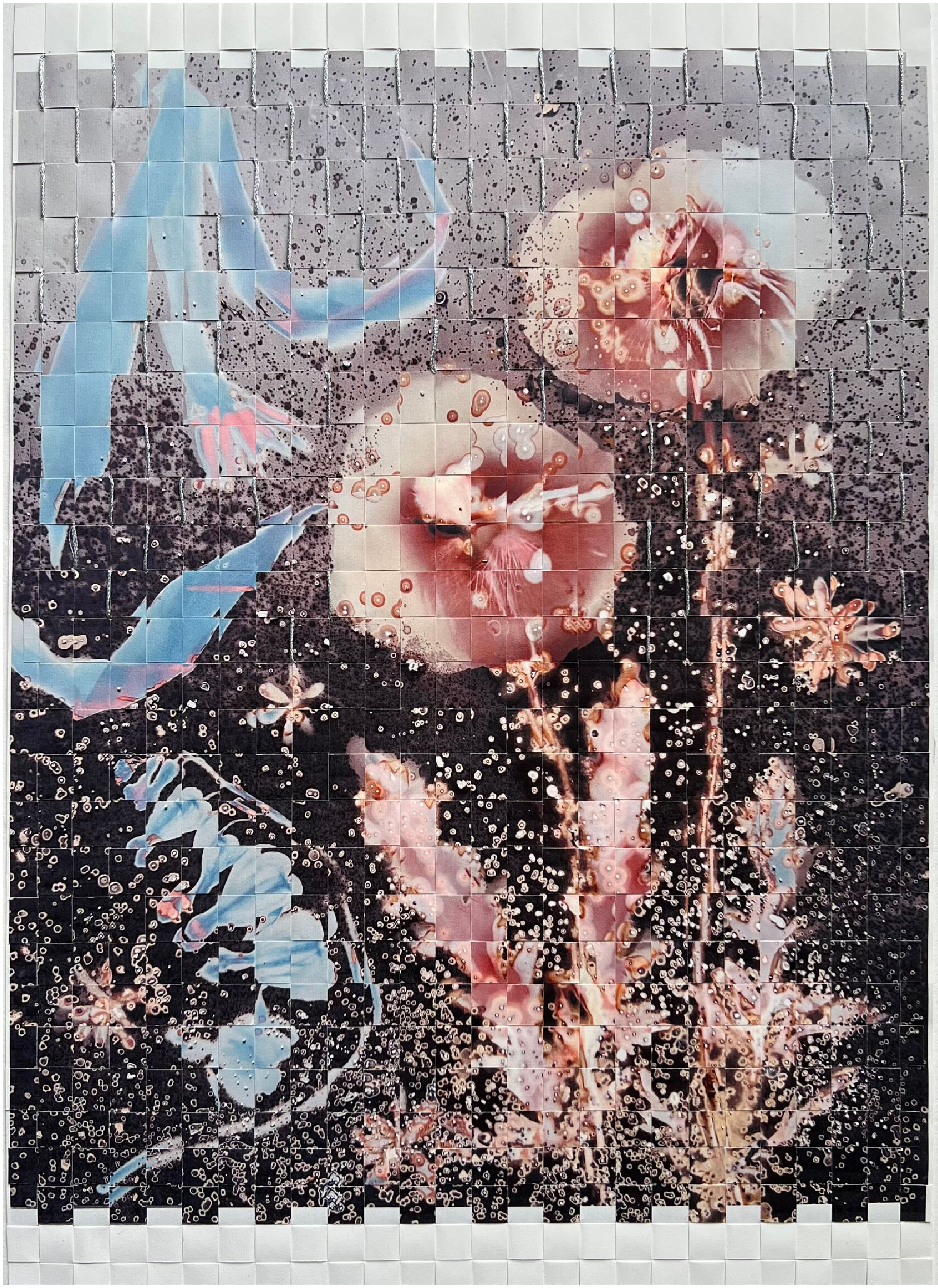
Teri Figliuzzi works with alternative photographic processes to produce images that emphasise a hand-crafted approach. Process and experimentation are essential to her work. She composes fragments of flowers, petals, leaves, and seaweed to create phytograms on film, using a plant-based developer. Her honours include a Merit Award in the Rfotofolio Open Call 2022 and second place in All About Photo Nature Magazine in 2023. Her work has been included in numerous juried group photography exhibitions across the US. She resides in New York City and continues to explore new techniques in her practice.

www.terifigliuzzi.com



© Figliuzzi Teri | Splendor - Gathering Light





© Figliuzzi Teri | Mirage - Gathering Light

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In times of turmoil or uncertainty, turning to nature grounds me and restores a sense of inner calm.

- Teri Figliuzzi

© Figliuzzi Teri I Reclaim - Gathering Onward

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Photography Gallery

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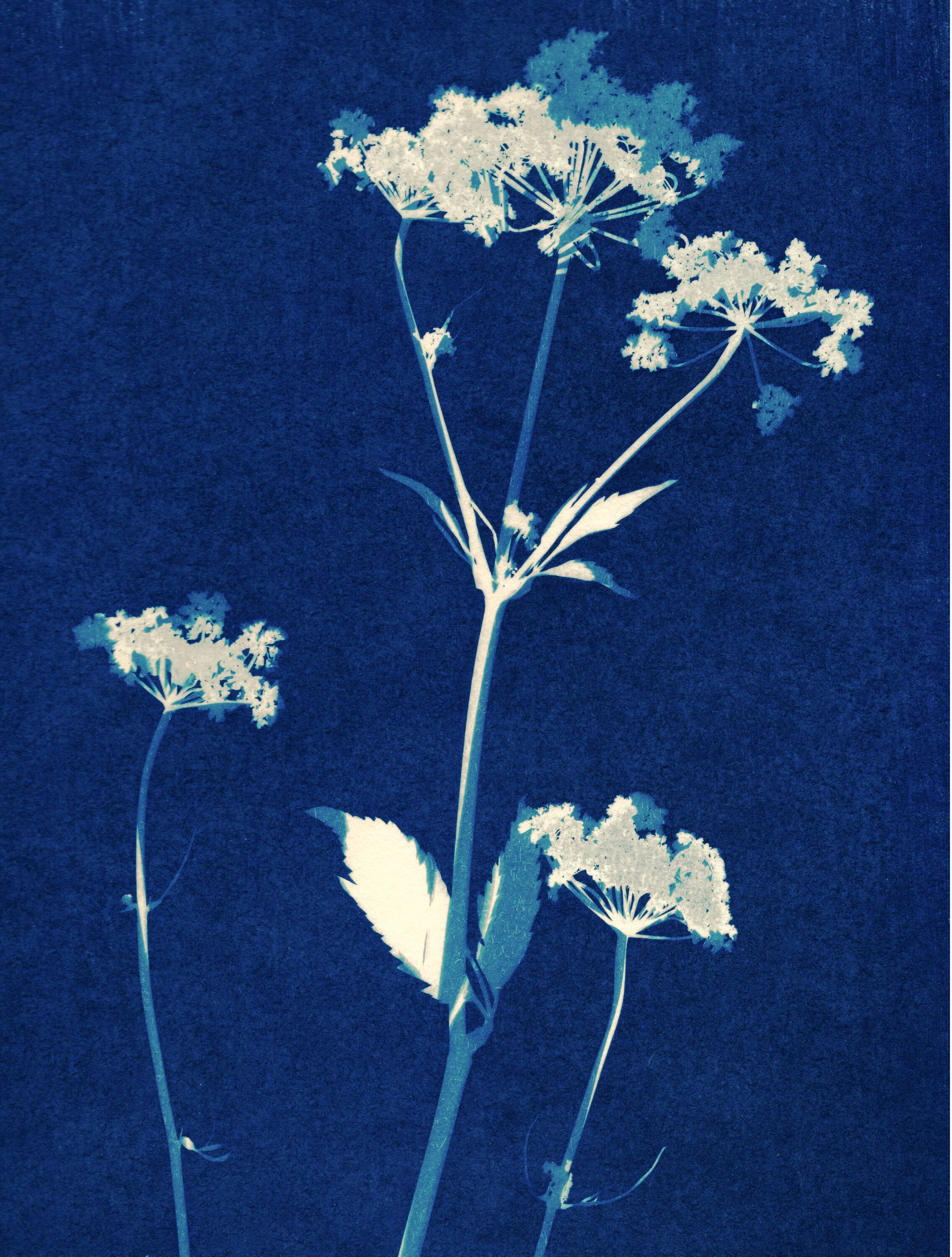
View in the Gallery

Julie Wang

In *The Illusion of Poppies*, Julie Wang presents a contemplative photographic series shaped by the shifting terrain of memory and perception. Repeatedly returning to the poppy as both subject and motif, Wang traces the flower's brief passage from bloom to dissolution, using its fragile life cycle as a meditation on impermanence and transformation. Rooted in her experience of growing up in China and later living in Germany, the work draws on the contrast between the poppy's inherited cultural associations and its everyday presence within a different landscape. What was once marked by loss and restraint now appears as abundant and ordinary, revealing how meaning shifts as it crosses cultural and temporal boundaries.

Characterised by layered tonalities and softened forms, the images hover between presence and erasure, reflecting the tension at the heart of the series: beauty entwined with unease, fragility balanced by resilience. Presented in the online Artdoc Photography Gallery, each work is produced as a certified Artdoc Gallery edition and accompanied by a certificate of authenticity. Printed on museum-grade Hahnemühle Bamboo paper and framed in a timeless wooden finish, the series positions photography as a space for reflection, renewal, and sustained looking.

VIEW ARTWORK



© Melanie Schoeniger | Cyano vivid

Blueprints, Botanicals, and the Contemporary Cyanotype

Cyanotype's journey from a nineteenth-century scientific tool to a contemporary photographic language reveals a profound shift in how images are created and understood. Once valued for precision and reproducibility, the process has been reclaimed as a medium of slowness, material sensitivity, and attentiveness to natural cycles. This transformation reflects a broader movement away from documentation toward dialogue, in which photographs emerge through collaboration with light, time, and organic matter rather than through control or mastery. In this context, cyanotype's contemporary significance lies not in nostalgia, but in its ability to hold uncertainty, care, and a renewed ethics of looking—inviting images to function less as records and more as sites of relationship.

Cyanotype entered photographic history not as an expressive medium, but as a tool of clarity and control. Developed in the mid-nineteenth century, it served science, engineering, and botany—fields concerned with classification, measurement, and reproducibility. The distinctive Prussian blue surface was valued not for atmosphere or ambiguity, but for its reliability. It rendered information visible, transferable, and fixed. In its earliest uses, cyanotype helped to map the world.

That this process has become central to contemporary photographic language centred on fragility, ecology, and memory signifies a profound cultural shift. Among artists working today with alternative processes, cyanotype has been reclaimed as a method of slow observation and experimentation rather than description—one that emphasises material presence and the boundaries of human perception. In a growing field of contemporary practice, cyanotype has developed from a technical blueprint to a botanical method, from mere documentation to engaging in a dialogue with the forces of nature.

This shift is not merely aesthetic. It signifies a wider change within photographic culture: moving from mastery to attentiveness, from certainty to relationship. The works of Gemma Pepper, Sarah Rafferty, Xenia Chetrar, and Melanie Schoeniger present distinct yet interconnected views on how cyanotype is being utilised to reimagine our engagement with nature, time, and image-making itself.

The Modern Cyanotype Process

In its contemporary use, cyanotype is seldom created with a camera. Instead, it is a cameraless photographic process that depends on direct contact, exposure, and the physical placement of materials onto sensitised paper. Plants, feathers, printed negatives, and found objects may be arranged by hand, allowing light to interact with these forms through exposure. In many contemporary practices, this involves placing a transparent printed negative sheet directly onto the sensitised paper, so that light passing through the transparency activates the chemical compounds beneath, establishing a direct, material relationship between image, surface, and process. This method extends beyond traditional sunlight exposure by incorporating ultraviolet (UV) light. By modifying the light source, artists can control the intensity and effects of exposure more precisely.

> Among artists working today with alternative processes, cyanotype has been reclaimed as a method of slow observation and experimentation.

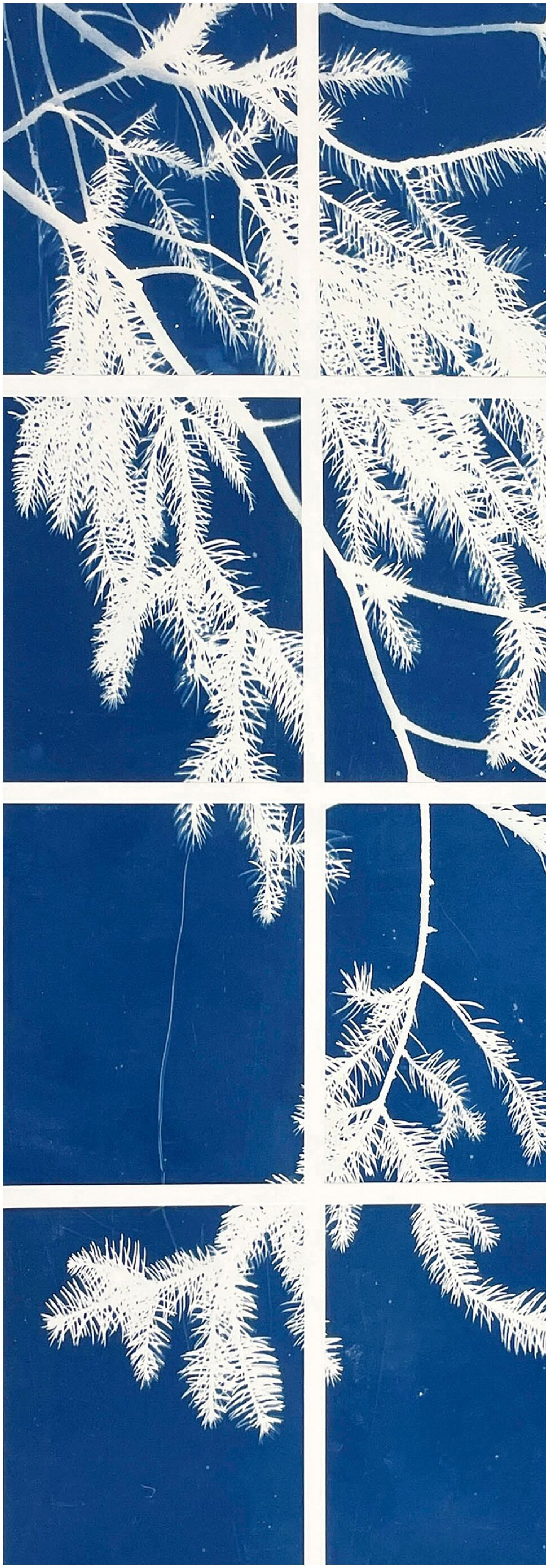
© Gemma Pepper | The voice of nature

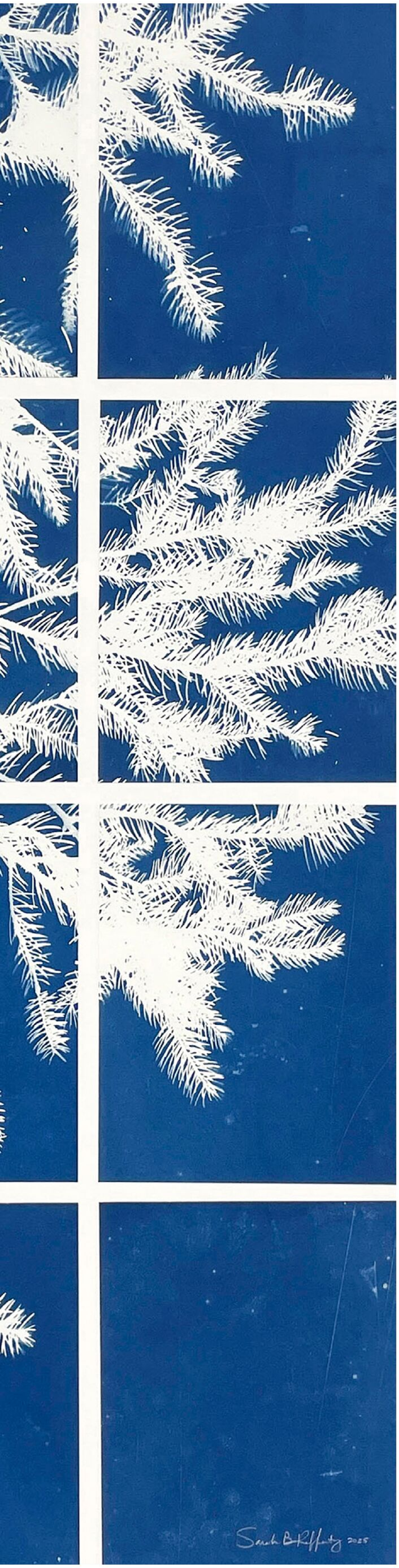
UV light, often employed for more subtle and detailed results, further influences the relationship between the material and the image, heightening contrasts or softening the delicate blue tones typical of cyanotype. The process involves not only the chemical interaction of light with paper but also a meticulous choreography of light, time, and the objects placed on the paper, each producing unique variations. The result is an image that doesn't just capture the scene but evolves over time, with each exposure shaping the photograph as a collaboration between light, object, and surface. This approach to working challenges traditional photography's dependence on a lens and highlights proximity, texture, and the flow of time. The cyanotype process, with its cameraless and experimental nature, rejects the mastery of optics, offering a slower, more embodied way of seeing.

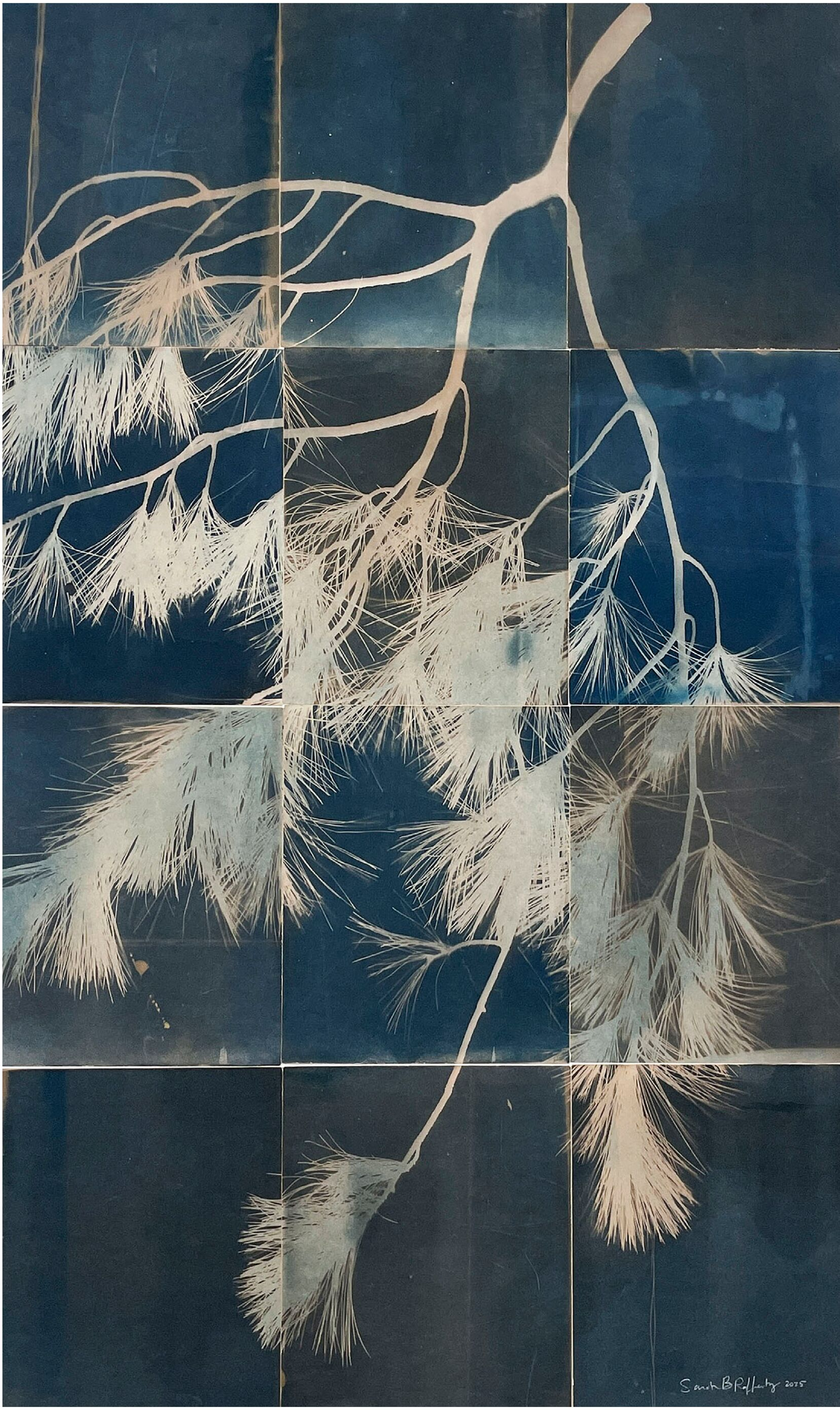
Relearning How to Look

If cyanotype once served to stabilise the world, its contemporary use often begins by unsettling habitual ways of seeing. Sarah Rafferty's series *Looking Up* emerges from a literal and conceptual shift in attention. During a residency, she found herself disengaged, looking downward and registering little beyond a blur of leaves. A visit to an arboretum disrupted that orientation. Forced to look upward by towering evergreens, she encountered a new visual rhythm—patterns of light, scale, and structure that had previously gone unnoticed.

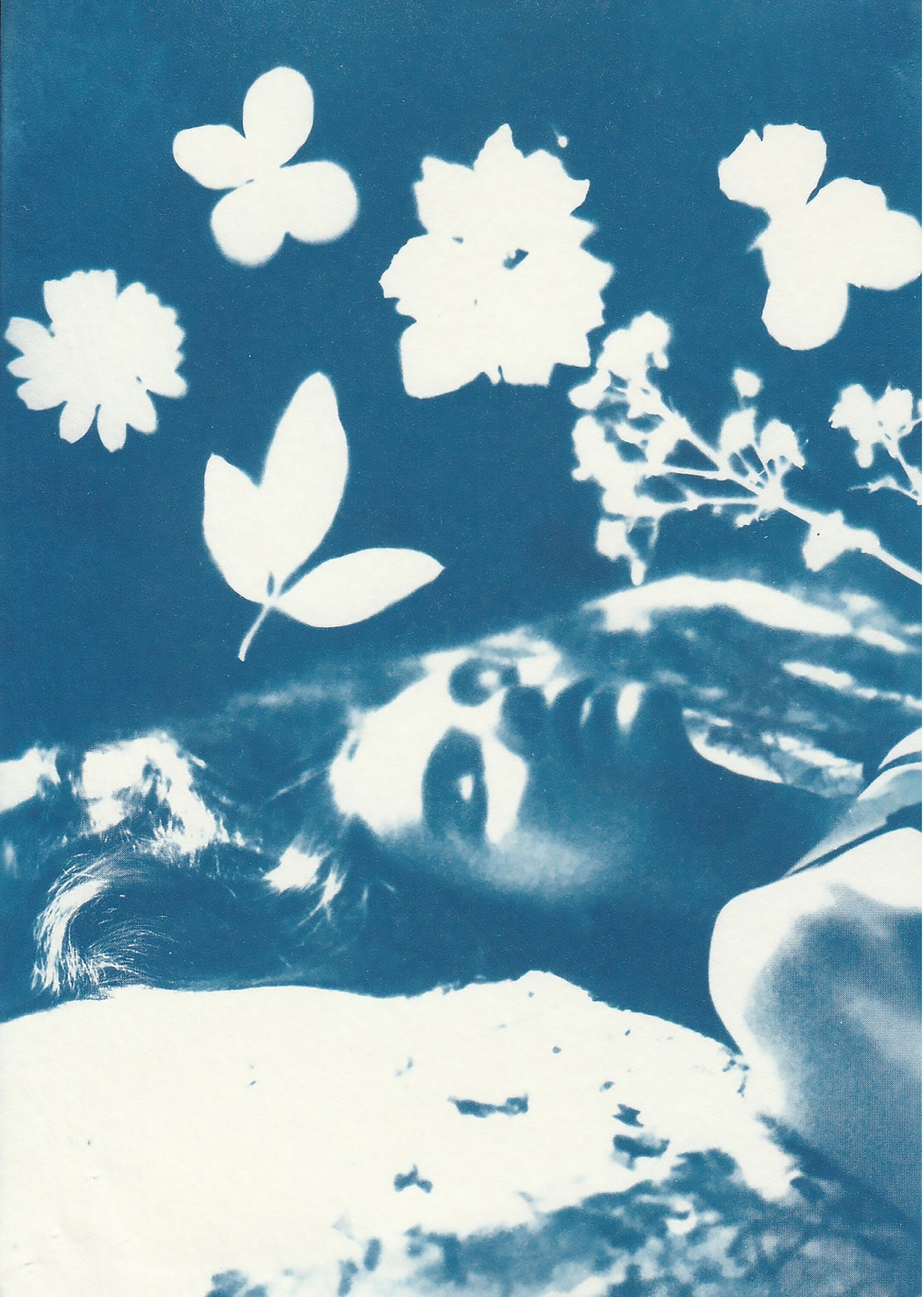
This change in perspective became a quiet methodology. Rafferty's work does not impose narrative but asks viewers to consider how perception itself is shaped by posture, habit, and pace. Her images are less about trees as subjects than about the act of noticing—about what becomes visible when the body and gaze are reoriented.




Sarah B Rafferty 2025


Sarah B Rafferty 2025

All images © Sarah Rafferty | Looking Up



© Xenia Chetrar | Dreamscapes of She

A similar attentiveness underpins Gemma Pepper's *The Voice of Nature*, though her work ventures further into imaginative realms. A dancing horsetail, a melancholy sunflower, a solitary black cumin: Pepper's cyanotypes depict plants as expressive beings, not literally, but as carriers of resonance and identification. While recognising that plants do not experience emotion as humans do, her work explores how their forms and behaviours can evoke states that reflect our own.

Pepper's cyanotypes defy precise description. Rich blue areas soften edges and blur details, prioritising gesture and suggestion over clear identification. Through meticulous arrangement and prolonged exposure, sometimes lasting up to an hour, time becomes embedded within the image. The outcome is not a botanical illustration but a visual reflection on shared existence, reminding viewers of their entanglement with the natural world they often instrumentalise.

Memory, Material, and the Unpredictable

Where Pepper and Rafferty work through attention and perspective, Xenia Chetrar approaches cyanotype and analogue processes as tools for navigating memory and identity. Her *Dreamscapes* occupy a space between documentation and reverie, using film photography, double exposure, and cyanotype to construct images that feel suspended between past and present.

Chetrar's embrace of analogue unpredictability is central to her practice. Film, with its tactile presence and susceptibility to chance, allows her to work with uncertainty rather than against it. Cyanotype, in this context, becomes a collaborator rather than a technique—its chemical responsiveness echoing the fragility of memory itself. Light leaks, layered exposures, and tonal shifts do not detract from meaning but generate it, producing images that resist resolution. Her portraits of women, often enveloped in shadow and light, do not assert identity so much as suggest it. They exist as traces rather than declarations, shaped by the cyanotype process, which is intertwined with her intention. In this way, Chetrar's work aligns cyanotype with a broader contemporary impulse: to allow photographs to remain open, provisional, and emotionally porous.

Process as Ethics

Melanie Schoeniger's work highlights the ethical implications of alternative processes. Her cyanotypes explore the symbolism of the peony—its fleeting beauty, cultural mythology, and connection to cycles of growth and decay. For Schoeniger, cyanotype is more than an aesthetic choice; it is an ecological and philosophical one.

Working with toned cyanotypes that avoid plastic and gelatin, she integrates natural materials directly into the image-making process. Unpredictability is embraced as a parallel to life's unfolding patterns, reinforcing the idea that flourishing is not a fixed state but an ongoing journey. Infrared imagery, UV light, and chiaroscuro effects reference both Renaissance painting and expanded perception, gesturing toward what lies beyond human sensory limits.

Her work does not position nature as a resource or backdrop, but as collaborator and teacher. In doing so, it reframes cyanotype as a medium capable of holding ecological responsibility—not through didactic messaging, but through material choice and processual care.

Time Made Visible

Across these practices, cyanotype serves as a temporal medium. Unlike digital photography's instantaneity, it requires duration: exposure to sunlight, waiting, and accepting variables beyond control. This temporal aspect aligns with themes many contemporary photographers are exploring—impermanence, transition, and the slow rhythms of natural systems.

Double exposures left in the sun, film subjected to chance, botanicals gathered over time rather than chosen for perfection: these slow actions oppose the acceleration of visual culture. They ask what it means to stay with a process long enough for change to register. In this way, cyanotype becomes not just a look, but a rhythm—a method of working that reflects the cycles it depicts.

This attention to time also complicates authorship. When outcomes are shaped by weather, chemistry, and organic decay, the photographer relinquishes complete control. The image becomes a record of collaboration between human intention and non-human agency, unsettling traditional hierarchies of maker and subject.

Beyond Projection

A recurring tension in contemporary nature-based photography is the risk of projection, whereby human emotion or meaning is attributed where none exists. The artists gathered here navigate this tension with care. Gemma Pepper acknowledges the physiological, rather than emotional, responses of plants even as she explores their expressive potential. Sarah Rafferty frames her work as a shift in human attention rather than an interpretation of arboreal intent. Xenia Chetrar's portraits hover between memory and abstraction without claiming psychological certainty. Melanie Schoeniger foregrounds process and interconnectedness over symbolism.

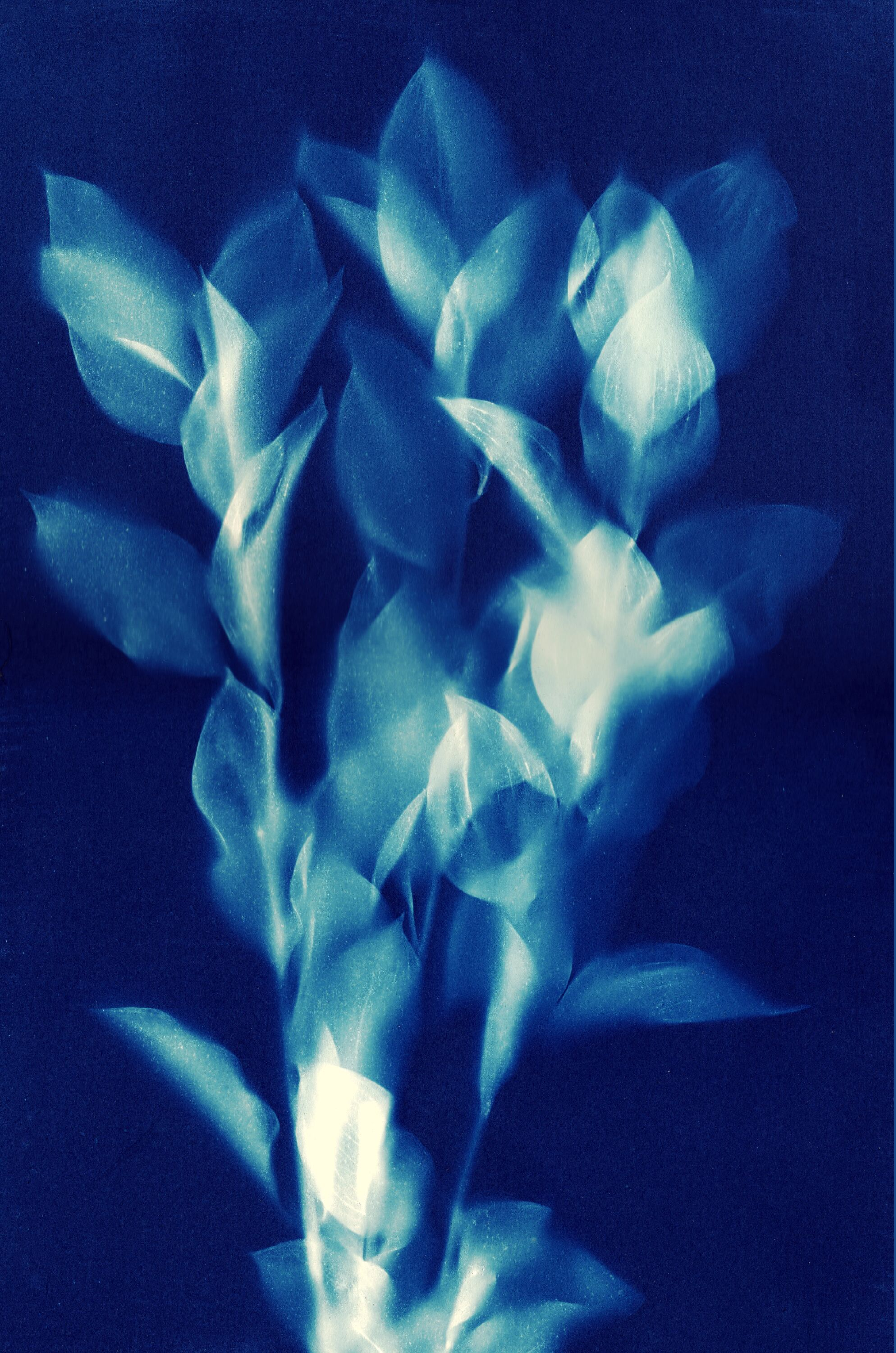
Together, these approaches suggest a way forward for photographic engagement with nature that neither romanticises nor objectifies. Cyanotype, with its historical roots in science and classification, becomes a particularly fitting medium for this approach. Its contemporary use does not reject its past but repositions it, transforming a tool of description into a space of reflection.

A Medium Reconsidered

The resurgence of cyanotype in contemporary photography is not merely a nostalgic return to an outdated technique. It reflects a re-evaluation of what photographic practice can offer in a time characterised by ecological uncertainty, technological saturation, and a renewed craving for meaning rooted in material reality.

By shifting from a blueprint to a botanical approach, cyanotype has abandoned its role as a neutral recorder and taken on a more complex identity—as a medium of care, slowness, and ethical engagement. In the hands of artists like Pepper, Rafferty, Chetrar, and Schoeniger, it becomes a way of staying with what is fragile, overlooked, or in transition. These works do not provide answers so much as conditions for attention. They ask viewers to look again, to look differently, and perhaps to recognise that the act of looking itself carries responsibility. In this sense, cyanotype's contemporary relevance lies not in its colour or chemistry, but in its capacity to hold space—for uncertainty, for relationship, and for a renewed understanding of how images might help us live more attentively within the world they depict.

All images © Melanie Schoeniger I By myself, it head bows & Peony



© Melanie Schoeniger | Cyano vivid

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The cyanotype process, with its cameraless and experimental nature, rejects the mastery of optics, offering a slower, more embodied way of seeing.

Open Call
The Inner Lens

Photography as a form of introspection and emotional resonance

We invite art photographers to submit work for *The Inner Lens* — a contemplative look at the unseen worlds we carry within. This open call centres on photography that reflects inward, capturing the layered complexity of introspection and emotional depth. In a time marked by noise, uncertainty, and shifting light, we're interested in images that do more than describe — photographs shaped by inner weather, personal mythologies, and the moments we rarely name aloud. For this open call, we welcome photographic work that reflects the interior landscape — emotional, psychological, or atmospheric. From abstraction to portraiture, from constructed images to personal documentary, we are drawn to work that holds presence, sensitivity, and thought.

SUBMIT YOUR WORK

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 18 JANUARY 2026

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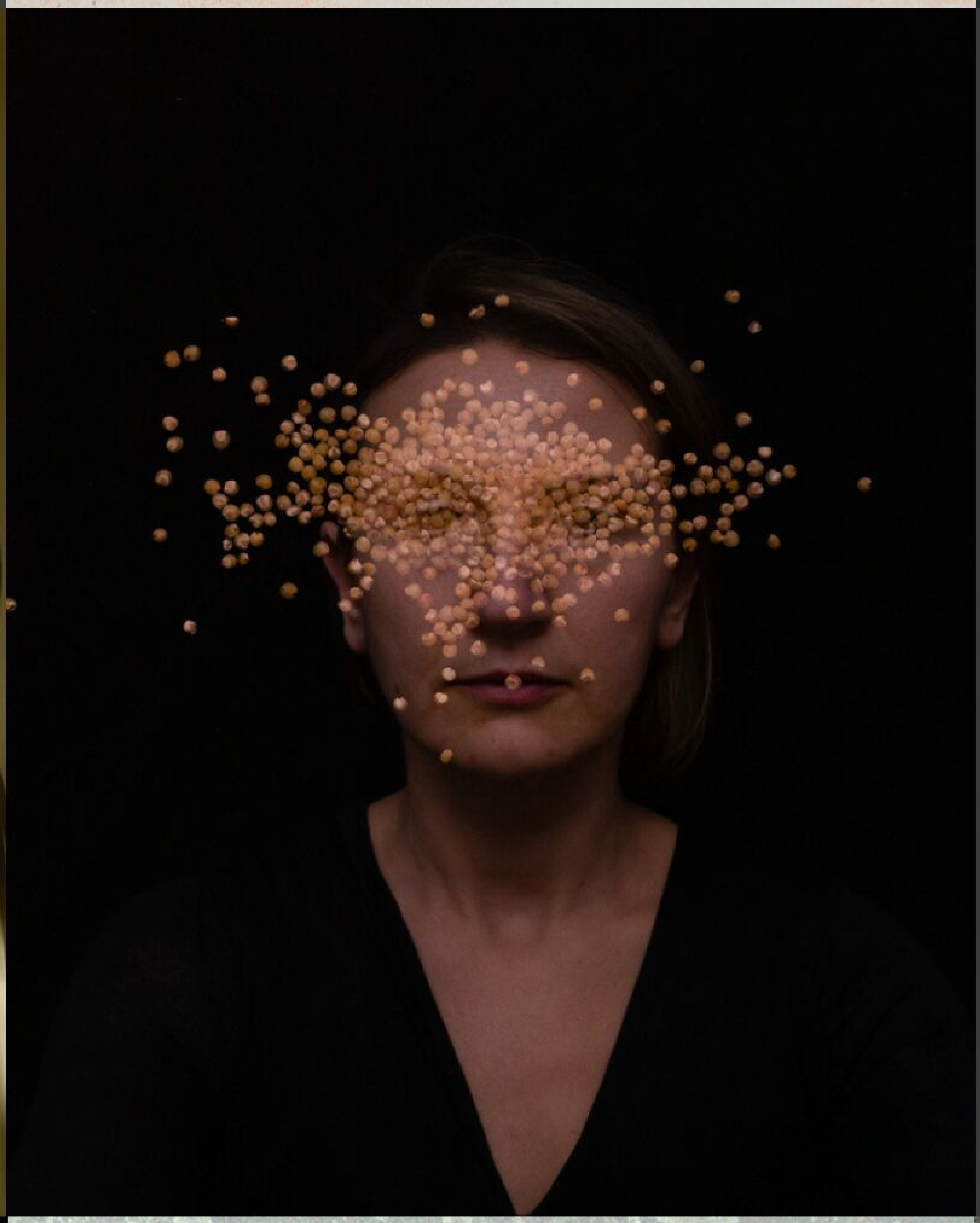

THE
INNER
LENS

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All images © Brendan Devlin | Oxbow

Oxbow

Brendan Devlin

> “The Connecticut River Oxbow took shape after the last ice age, carved as glaciers retreated and post-glacial lakes released torrential floodwater into the sea. These photographs document a still, quiet, meditative moment amid continuous transformation, destruction, and renewal.

About

Brendan Devlin is a self-taught photographer, printmaker, bookmaker, and lifelong collaborator with the land and the sea. His work has appeared in On Landscape, Shots, and The Hand, and has been exhibited across the United States, and is held in museum and private collections worldwide. He is currently working on three long-term projects centred on the Connecticut River Oxbow, the rocky shores of New England, and the wind-shaped oaks of Martha’s Vineyard.

www.beedevlin.com

All images © Brendan Devlin | Oxbow

© Leslie Gleim | Life Of The Land

Life Of The Land

Leslie Gleim

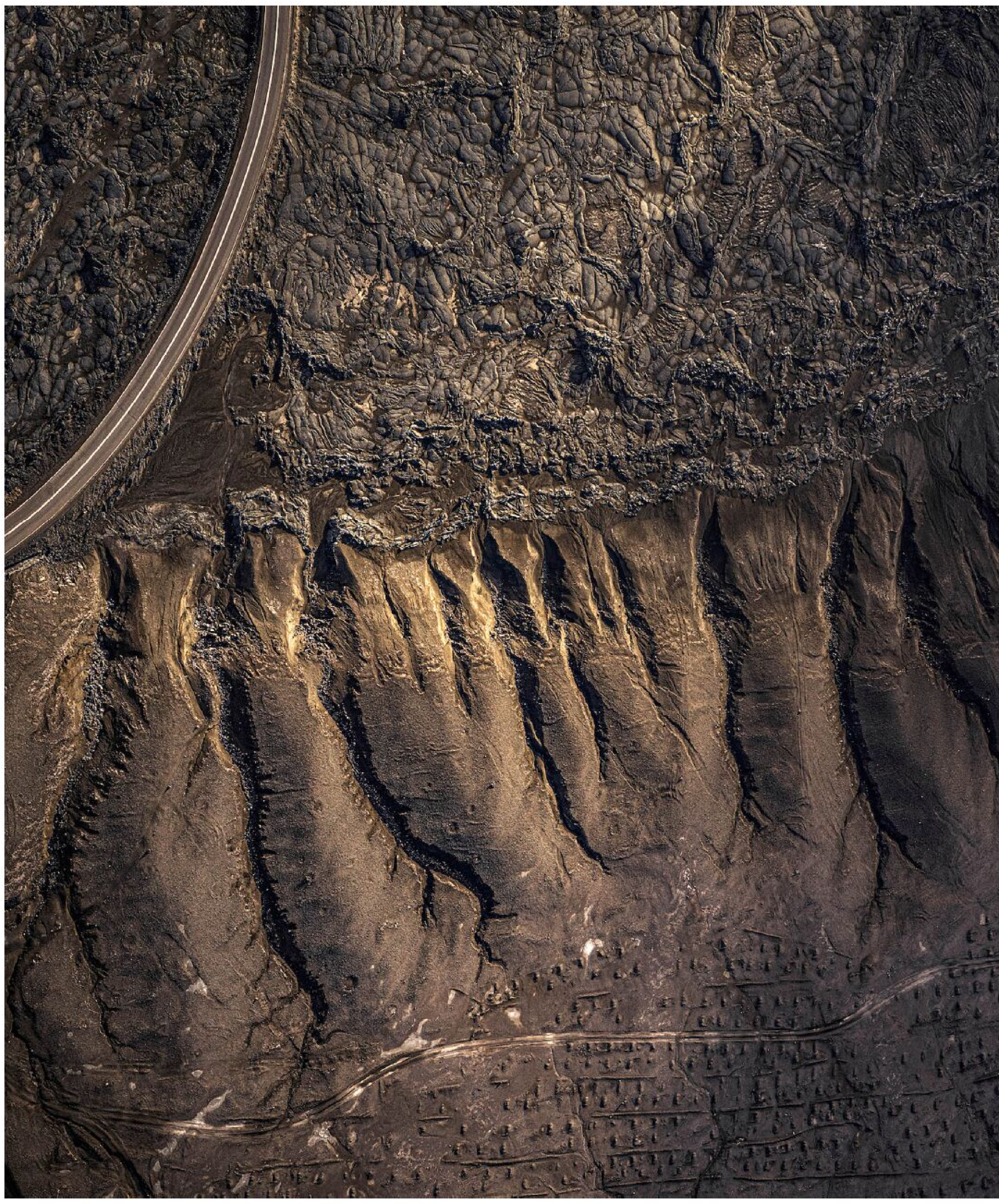
With *Life of the Land,* Leslie Gleim presents an expansive aerial meditation on Hawai‘i Island, where the landscape emerges as both a living record and a site of quiet reflection. Photographed from a helicopter, the series transforms a bird’s-eye view into an act of deep listening, where light, time and form converge. Ancient lava flows and fissures unfold like a geological manuscript, carrying fragments of Hawai‘i’s mo‘olelo and speaking to cycles of resilience, destruction and renewal. More than topographical studies, Gleim’s images operate as visual meditations—quiet, attentive works that honour the spirit of the ‘āina and invite viewers into a slower, more reflective way of seeing.

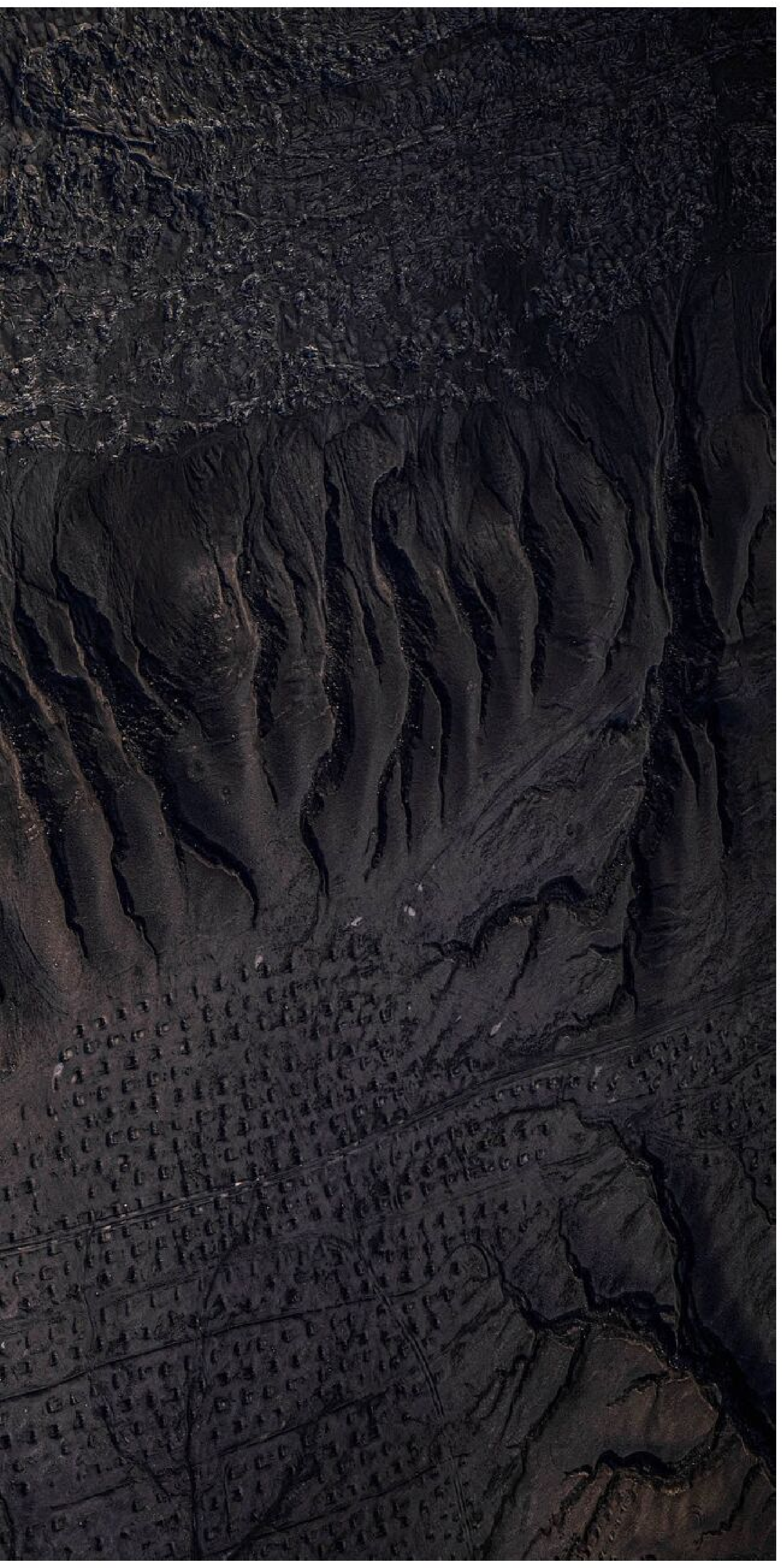
“ Photographed from a helicopter, *Life of the Land* is a series of images made through acts of attentiveness—a bird’s-eye meditation on light, time, form, and elemental memory. Photographed from above Hawaiʻi Island, I found a stillness that allowed me to listen more deeply, to witness the ancient conversation between earth and sky, and to photograph not only what I saw, but what I felt.

These photographs reveal ancient lava flows, cones, and fissures that etch themselves across the terrain like pages torn from a geological journal spanning millennia. Each formation offers a fragment of Hawaiʻi’s moʻolelo—a story of resilience, adaptation, and ongoing transformation.

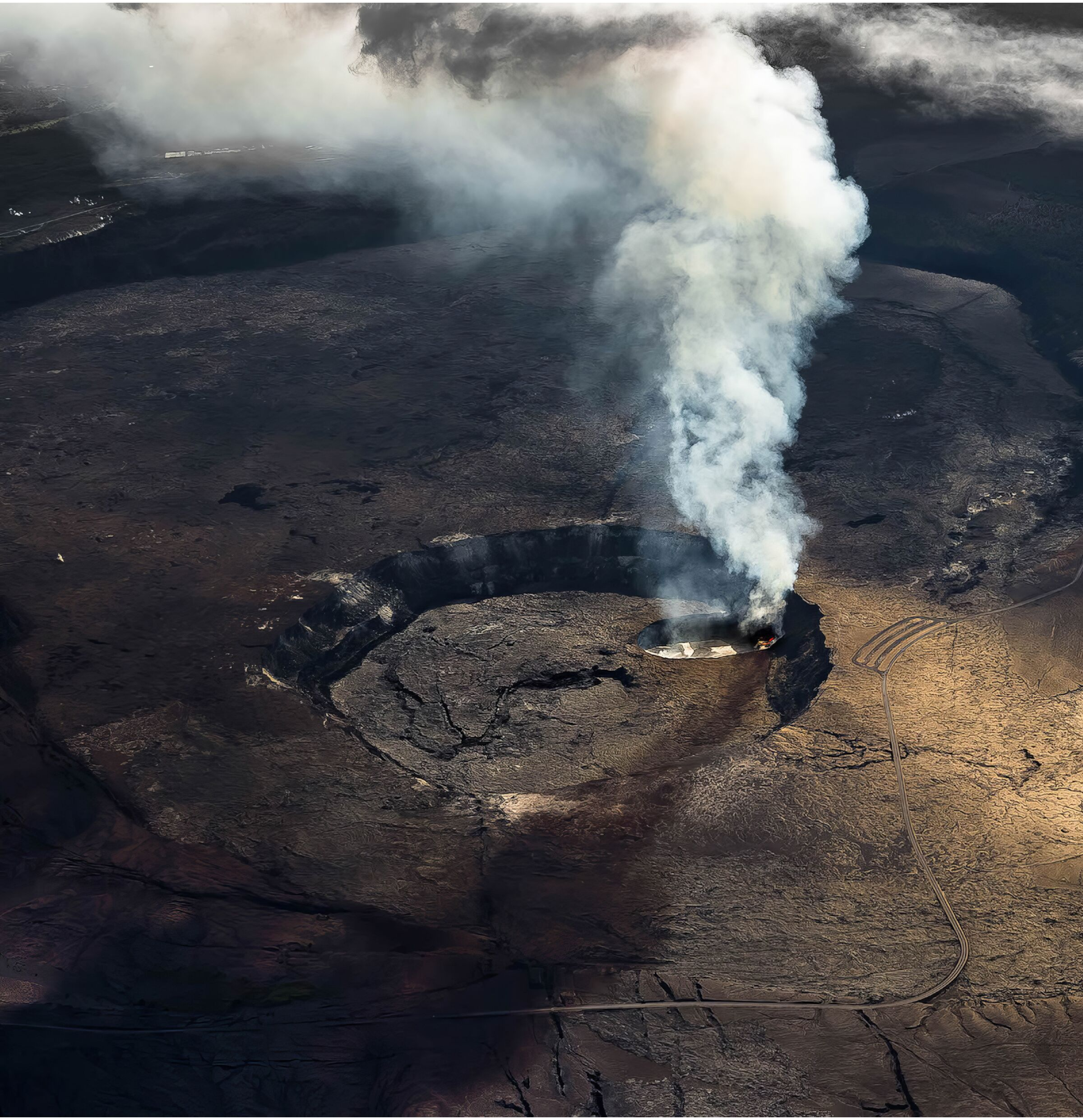
More than records of geological features, these images are windows into the soul of the ʻāina (land), revealing the timeless forces that have shaped and reshaped it. I see each photograph as a word or sentence in a living manuscript, one that offers both historical and present-day insight into the cycles of destruction and renewal that continue to birth these islands from within.

This process of photographing from above has become a form of quiet dialogue—a way of seeing slowly and listening deeply. In this suspended stillness, each image becomes a quiet offering, a visual poem that honours the enduring breath of the land and invites a silent conversation with its spirit.





All images © Leslie Gleim | Life Of The Land

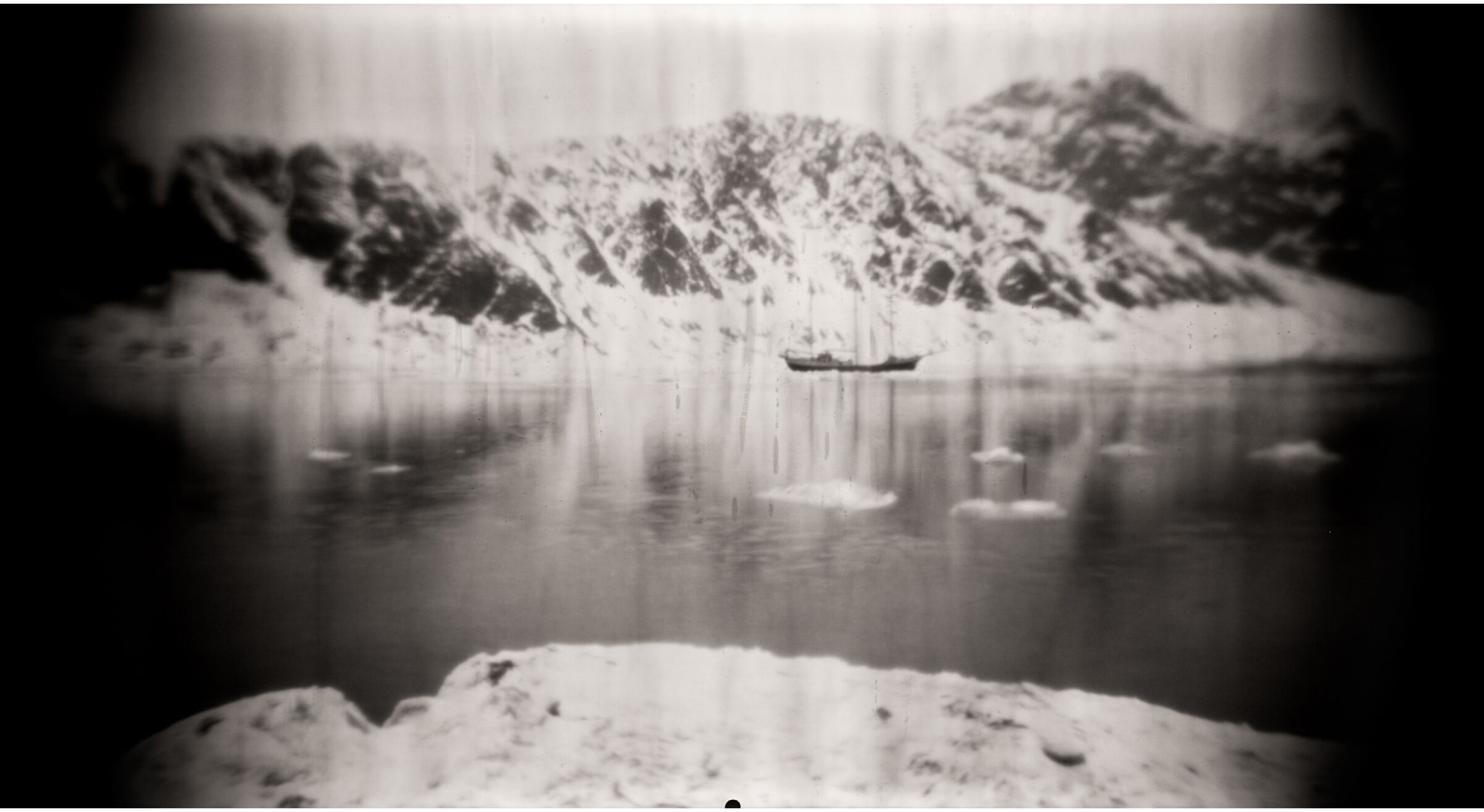


© Leslie Gleim | Life Of The Land

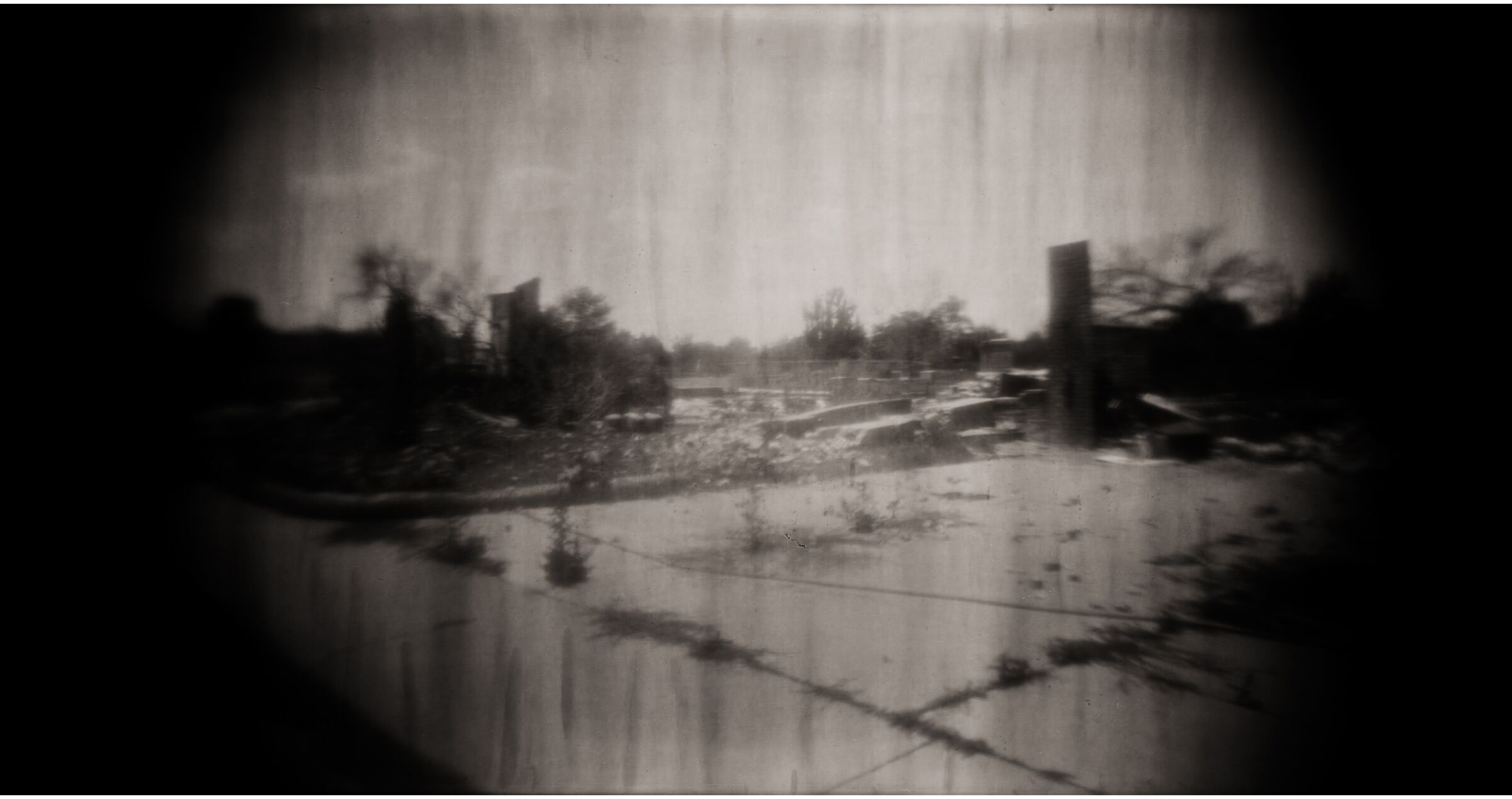
About

Leslie is a Honolulu-based fine art photographer whose work bridges the realms of documentary and fine art. Drawing from wonder and research, she creates evocative visual narratives that explore the complex interplay between natural forces, climate, and human impact on the ʻāina (land). Through aerial perspectives and intimate botanical studies, Leslie highlights environmental concerns to inspire empathy, reflection, and action. Her work invites viewers to consider humanity's role in environmental stewardship and the legacy left for future generations. Leslie's photography has been exhibited and published locally, nationally, and internationally.

www.lesliegleim.com



© Tristan Duke | Series: Arctic Expedition - Antigua at Fjortende Julibreen Glacaier, Svalbard (Fogged), 2022
Ice lens photograph, gelatin silver contact print, 42 × 90 inches (106.7 × 228.6 cm)



© Tristan Duke | Series: Fire and Ice - Marshall Fire, Colorado 01, 2022
Ice lens photograph, gelatin silver contact print, 42 × 90 inches (106.7 × 228.6 cm)

Ice as the pencil of nature

Tristan Duke

A black-and-white photograph shows a ship amid snow-capped mountains on an Arctic island. It appears to be a 100-year-old image taken during the discovery of the North Pole. Still, this gelatin silver contact print, titled *Antigua at Fjortende Julibreen, Svalbard (Fogged), 2022,* is part of the project *Glacial Optics* by the American artist Tristan Duke. The photograph is created using an ice lens, acting as both a creative and empirical witness to climate change—something we all know about but cannot fully fathom.

Climate change was the catalyst for Tristan Duke's decision to undertake his project on ice lenses. "These issues had been in my mind, but the real push to do glacial optics was realising that we're at this hinge point in the story. When I was growing up in the '80s and '90s, climate change was still in a more theoretical space, but now people are actually seeing climate change as something that they can understand in their own lives and lifetimes."

Duke aimed to connect different scales of time. "We face a challenge in confronting the scale of climate change because we, as humans, live a relatively short time on Earth, giving us a narrow view in geological terms. In the Glacial Optics Project, I wanted to experiment with a lens, so to speak, that brings in that larger scale—both in size and in duration—to access the deep time of the glacier and that broader scope of time."

The Chinese Alchemist

The idea of producing his own lens from ice originated in a used bookshop, where Duke found an old book containing a passage about a Chinese alchemist who, around 300 A.D., described using a ball of ice to start a fire. "This led me to begin researching the concept of creating a lens from ice. My first experiment was to replicate the Chinese alchemist's experiment, using an ice lens as a magnifying glass to ignite a fire. However, I also discovered Japanese technology for making cocktail ice, which is like an ice press. The ice is warmed in a metal mould; a chunk of ice is placed between two parts, melting into the desired shape. I made my own custom ice presses in lens shapes, and that's how I managed to create these lenses from glacier ice."

Duke experimented with different lens shapes and focal lengths. He developed a kit that allowed him to assemble front and back surfaces in different configurations. "I can recombine different pieces of the ice press in various ways and flip them. They have different curvatures machined into their sides. I can produce lenses with different focal lengths by reassembling their parts. I can make a range of lenses for different needs at any time. I believe this is the only camera system where, if you want to change lenses, you can reshape the lens on the spot. And if the ice lens gets a scratch, you can remelt it."

To obtain a sharp image with the ice lens, the ice should be actively melting. "When melting, the ice lens forms a liquid envelope of water over the surface, and the surface tension of this water makes the lens perfectly clear and smooth. This is analogous to the function of tears on the surface of the human eye. Without that wetted surface, the ice does not make such a good lens. To make matters worse, when it gets below zero, the ice lens tends to frost up."

© Tristan Duke | Series: Arctic Expedition - Sukkertoppen, Svalbard, 2022
ice lens photograph, pigment print, 42 × 63 inches (106.7 × 160.02 cm)

> “I made my own custom ice presses in lens shapes, and that’s how I managed to create these lenses from glacier ice.

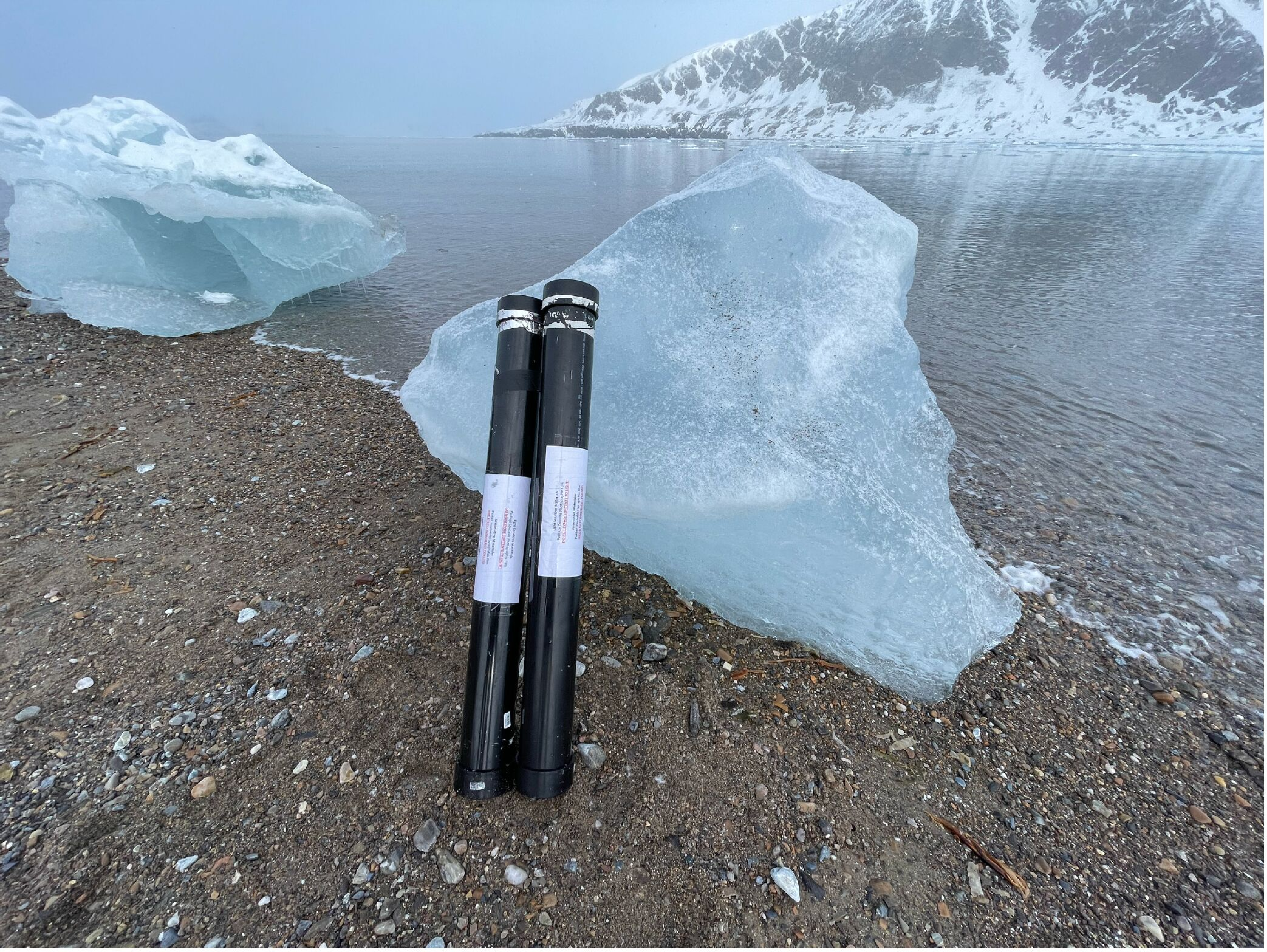
Camera obscura

Just before exposure, Duke inserts the handmade-on-the-spot lens into the fixture of his foldable, tent-like camera obscura. The focal lengths of his ice range from 1000mm or longer (given the massive scale of his camera, this corresponds to an angle of view comparable to that of a 50mm or longer lens on a standard full-frame camera). Inside the tent, he hangs the paper negative, which can measure up to 2.5 meters in length, on the opposite side of the lens. After exposure, he wraps the large sheet of paper negative and brings it back to his studio to develop. The positive print is made by placing the negative face down on a new sheet of photo paper and exposing it to light. In this way, he can print small editions, which is challenging due to the very delicate dodging and burning required to achieve the desired tonal ranges. “Because the contact print is facing down, dodging is a little tricky because you’re doing it blind. You have to put considerable planning into it. I have special templates and setups where I plan everything.”

Spitsbergen

For his project, Tristan flew to the Norwegian Arctic island of Svalbard, part of the Spitsbergen archipelago named by the Dutch explorer Willem Barentsz. Svalbard Island, mainly covered by ice, is situated about 565 km north of Norway and is warming at an alarming rate, six to seven times faster than the global average, making it a frontline for climate change, with dramatic temperature increases, rapid glacier melt, disappearing sea ice, and thawing permafrost, leading to ecosystem disruption. “I travelled in the very beginning of April, for the dawning of the polar day. It’s still a freezing time of year. I was very nervous about whether the setup with my lenses would work at all. It turned out in a bitter irony that when I arrived, Spitsbergen had a climate change-induced heatwave, and the temperatures were far above normal. When I was there, the temperature hovered around 0°c.

© Tristan Duke | Process



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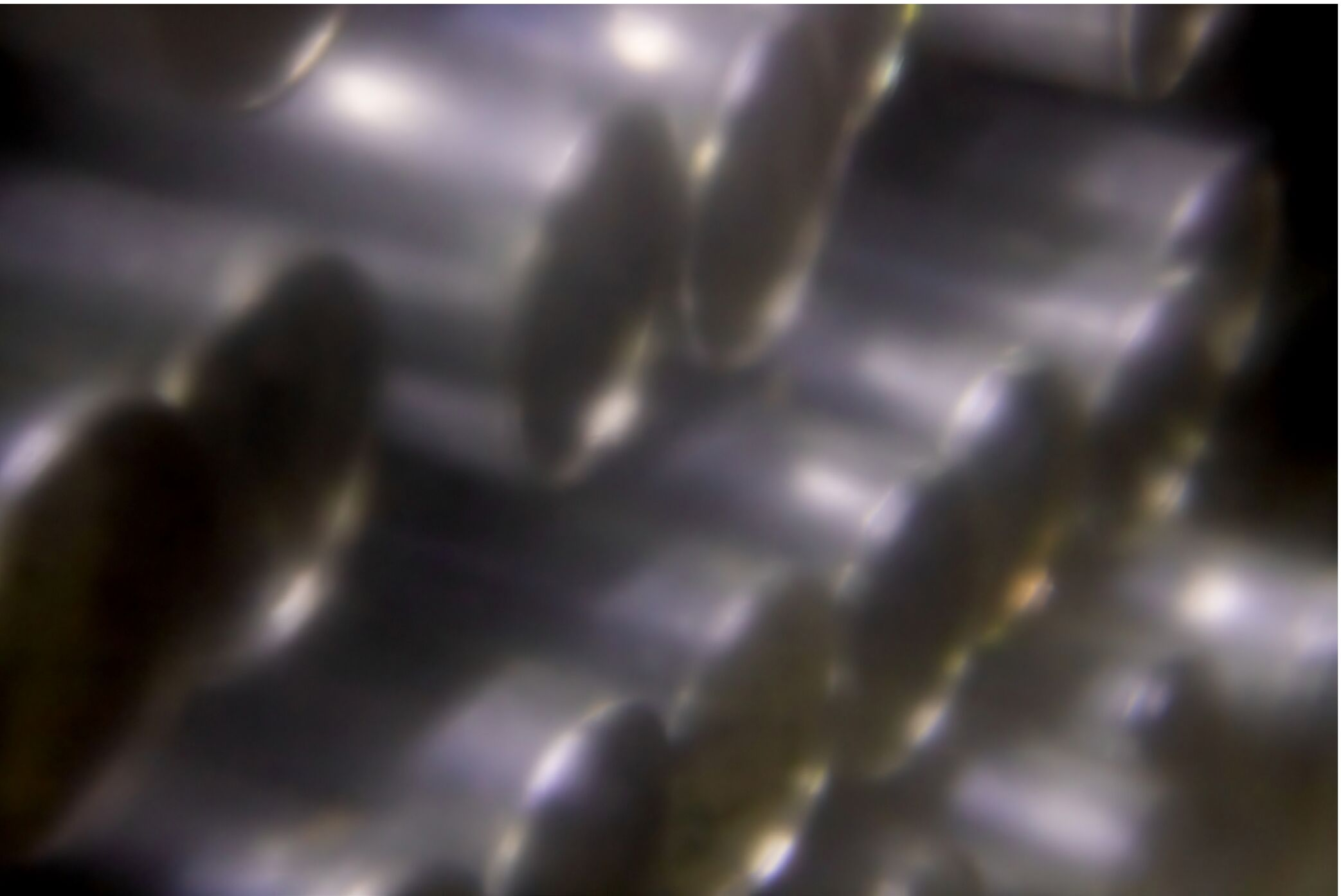


© Tristan Duke I Series: Ice Core Labs - Byrd Polar Ice Core Archive, Ohio 01, 2024
Ice lens photograph, pigment print, 42 × 63 inches (106.7 × 160.02 cm)

Thus, this was at the freezing point. I quickly discovered that if I dipped my lens fixture into seawater, the water was sufficiently salty that it would cling to the surface, wetting it and inducing some melting, even though we were hovering just below freezing. If it were too cold, that still wouldn't have worked."

But aside from the irony, climate change made the project possible, which, for Tristan Duke, offered a poetic notion that the lens must be melting for it to see. The technique involving the ice lens is only feasible with melting ice, creating a double witness: one from the essence of photography and another from the lens's melting. "The ice lens bears witness to our current moment of rapidly melting glaciers. These images are infused with a sense of deep time and the things we're losing now. I often leave a quite large vignette around the final print so that you see the full image circle. These photographs not only capture the scene but also depict the lens itself. I want to remind people that we're looking through this aperture of ice."

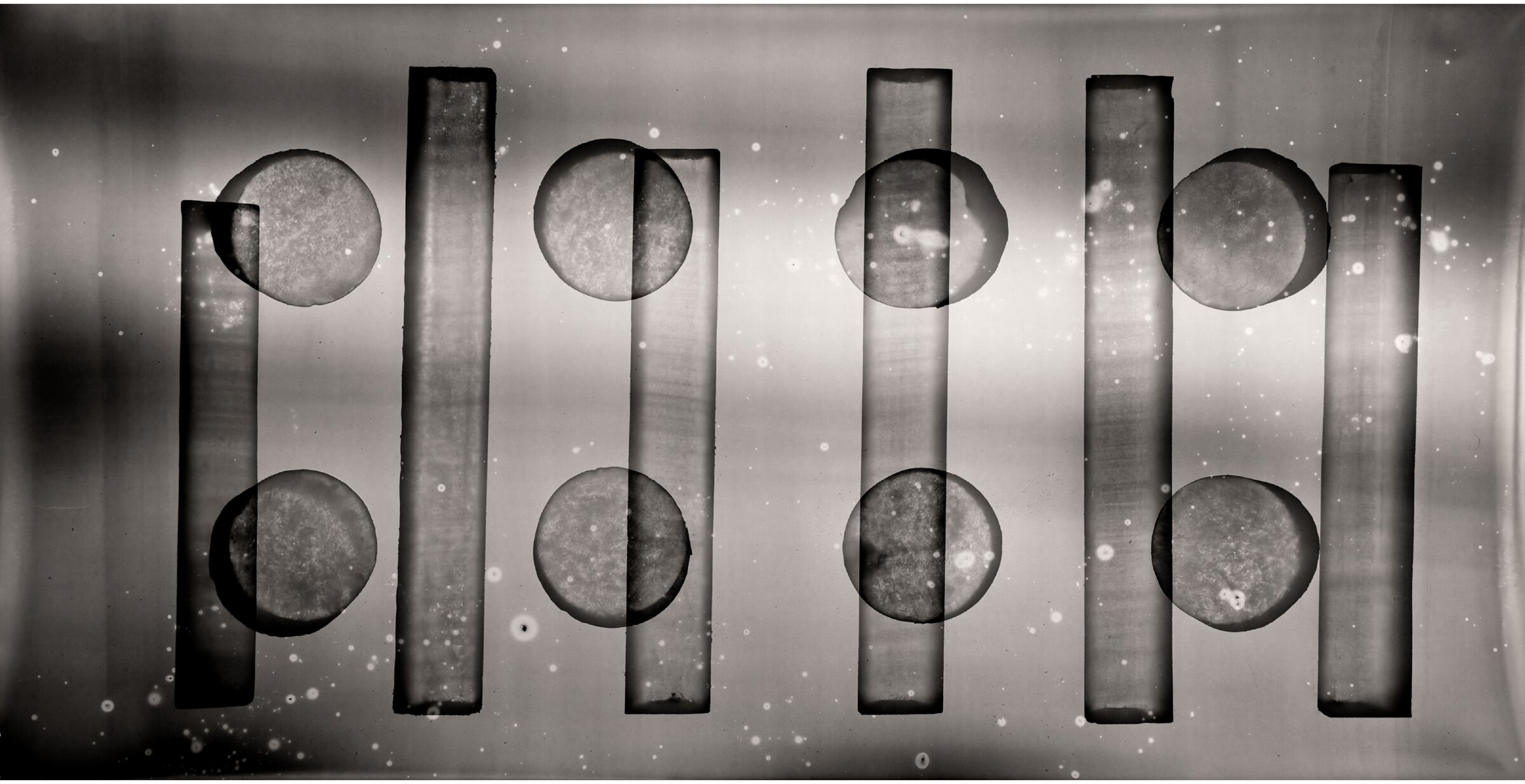
The big picture

Even though we are all scientifically well informed about global warming, it is often difficult to form a mental image of the process, aside from the almost clichéd images of solitary white polar bears. Scientific reports with diagrams don't produce a wider picture. "Biologically, we have evolved to survive within a local frame – adapting and responding to the environment we encounter directly. But we have become a more global species; not only do we get information from around the globe almost instantly, but our modern lifestyles also have wider impacts on the global environment. And yet we're living within the biological programming of a local species. This is one of the major challenges we face: reconciling our daily lives and lived experience with the increasingly big picture we're confronted with."

It was a significant part of his motivation for taking this trip to Svalbard. "I really felt the responsibility, as an artist, to try to create images that convey the urgency of the climate crisis in a new way. I believe art has the power to communicate something beyond the obvious. It's like the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, where sometimes the right image can resonate and say more than words or data ever could. I wanted to see whether art might be a way to make people curious about climate change from a different perspective, because I believe we're desensitised. We build a thick skin around this issue."

Annual layers of ice

Duke also visited the National Science Foundation Ice Core Facility and other climate science laboratories, where researchers study glacier ice to understand Earth's climate history better. At these laboratories, he produced photograms of ice cores, samples of ice extracted from deep within glaciers. "You walk into this huge warehouse-sized freezer, filled with racks and racks of tubes, each containing a one-meter-long cylinder, a sample of ice. The ice cores contain strata, annual layers, which are very much like tree rings. They depict the glacier's growth over time. It's like having a time machine where the scientists can go back and collect a sample of air from millions of years ago." As a visiting artist, Duke used the ancient ice as a lens in his darkroom tent, capturing ice-lens images of climate science in action.



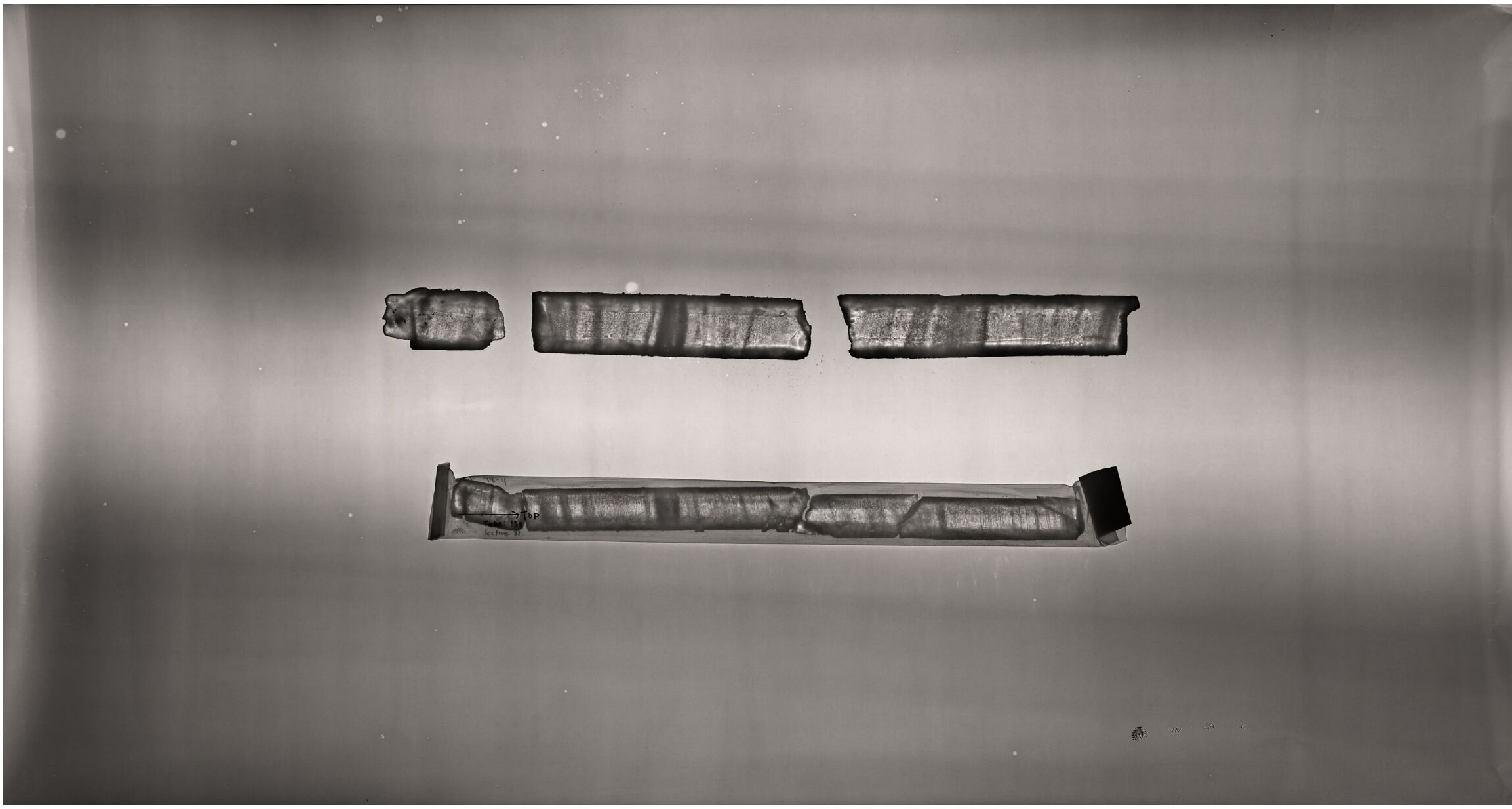
© Tristan Duke | Series: Ice Core Labs - Ice Core Study 06: NSF-ICF Greenland Ice Sheet Cores with Allan Hills Cores, 2023
Gelatin silver photogram, 50 × 90 inches (127 × 228.6 cm)

In his *Ice Core Studies* series, he also placed the excavated ice cylinders on sensitive paper, creating photograms of the historical patterns within the ice that reveal the geological evolution of oxygen and carbon levels in Earth's history. "What's fascinating is that you not only get the silhouette of the ice, but because the ice is transparent, you also see light passing through it, and the photogram records the strata in the ice, the annual layers—precisely the layers that scientists study. This was an exciting discovery. It was thrilling that these images convey this essential climate science story and align with the original vision of the glacial optics project. In some ways, these photograms are the most formal distillation of the idea of an ice lens, because, of course, you still have light passing through ice to be recorded on film. But in this case, the ice cylinder itself becomes the full subject."

The pencil of nature

The images of ice cylinders representing the geological strata might be considered surrealist, even though they are essentially realistic. "I recently saw the big Man Ray show at the MET in New York. My *Ice Core Studies* certainly resonate with his photogram work, but perhaps more relevant are Fox Talbot's *photogenic drawings,* especially his photogram prints of leaves and other botanical subjects. My ice-core studies may appear abstract and formal, but they are also highly scientific. My work is often situated between the worlds of art and science."

Fox Talbot, the inventor of the calotype process, which also used paper as a negative, titled his book *The Pencil of Nature*, stating that it was not he himself but nature that made the picture and that he was essentially the artist. "Talbot's appellation



© Tristan Duke | Series: Ice Core Labs -Ice Core Study 08: NSF-ICF Fremont Glacier Cores, 2023
Gelatin silver photogram, 42 × 83 inches (106.7 × 210.8 cm)

refers chiefly to photography's automatic action – the image appearing on the film, without needing the hand of an artist to render it. In many ways, *Glacial Optics* extends the notion of the 'pencil of nature.' By creating a lens from the very landscape, and invoking a glacial gaze, nature becomes the camera and the photographer too."

"Photography was more discovered than it was invented. The light-recording action of silver salts is a natural phenomenon, and the resulting photograph can be thought of as a kind of fossil image, a photo-fossil formed in silver. This project seeks to redefine photography as a land-based practice. People often overlook that the basic materials of photography are derived from the land. Even the most modern digital camera contains rare-earth elements and silicon. And the lens itself is made from silica, from sand."

Photography as art

There is a distinction between documentary photography and the so-called 'fine art' photography. Still, they are the same, sharing the essence of photography as a subjective and transformative documentation of reality. Tristan Duke does not distinguish between the two visions, referring instead to the image's aura. "What Walter Benjamin means by aura is similar to a sense of provenance. It's like the sense that a physical object has a history. Once you start reproducing images, the connection to the material is broken. The *Glacial Optics* project seeks to capture something of the aura of the climate crisis –or at least, through multiple layers of indexicality, create images that are deeply connected to the material reality of this moment. These negatives were transported to the Arctic, hauled across the ice, pinned up in a tent, and then a piece of glacier ice was shaped and placed in front of them, and the shutter was opened. The images speak to that action in space and time." His works practically demonstrate that photography is a time-based medium. Duke challenges the mechanical repeatability of photography, questioning traditional ideas. "I inject some wildness into the process to make photography more feral, to make photography more of nature. It is an inversion of the romantic gaze, because in the romantic gesture, you're depicting nature as this unbridled, cataclysmic force, untamed and indomitable. With this project, I'm venturing into the world with this fragile, melting glacial ice lens. It's a fragile nature that is bearing witness to an indomitable human world full of cataclysmic extremes."

Curiosity and creativity

Intentionally, his work is non-polemical, as Tristan Duke's reference is not a political statement but an artistic wonder. "I'm not starting with a scientific or political climate message necessarily. The initial impression of my work is an invitation to curiosity and mystery, because if we fail to address climate change, it will be a failure of imagination. We need to become inventive. We need to be creative. My intention with this project is to lead with curiosity and creativity to prompt people to examine the situation. Because there is too much polarised politics around this topic. Confronted with a heartbreaking image of climate devastation, people tend to jump into their comfort zone. If you already think that climate change is a hoax, then you might think it is propaganda and ignore it. Or if you are already sympathetic to the notion of climate crisis, you might feel depressed and want to look away. Both of those positions shut our eyes. I want to open the imagination with curiosity."

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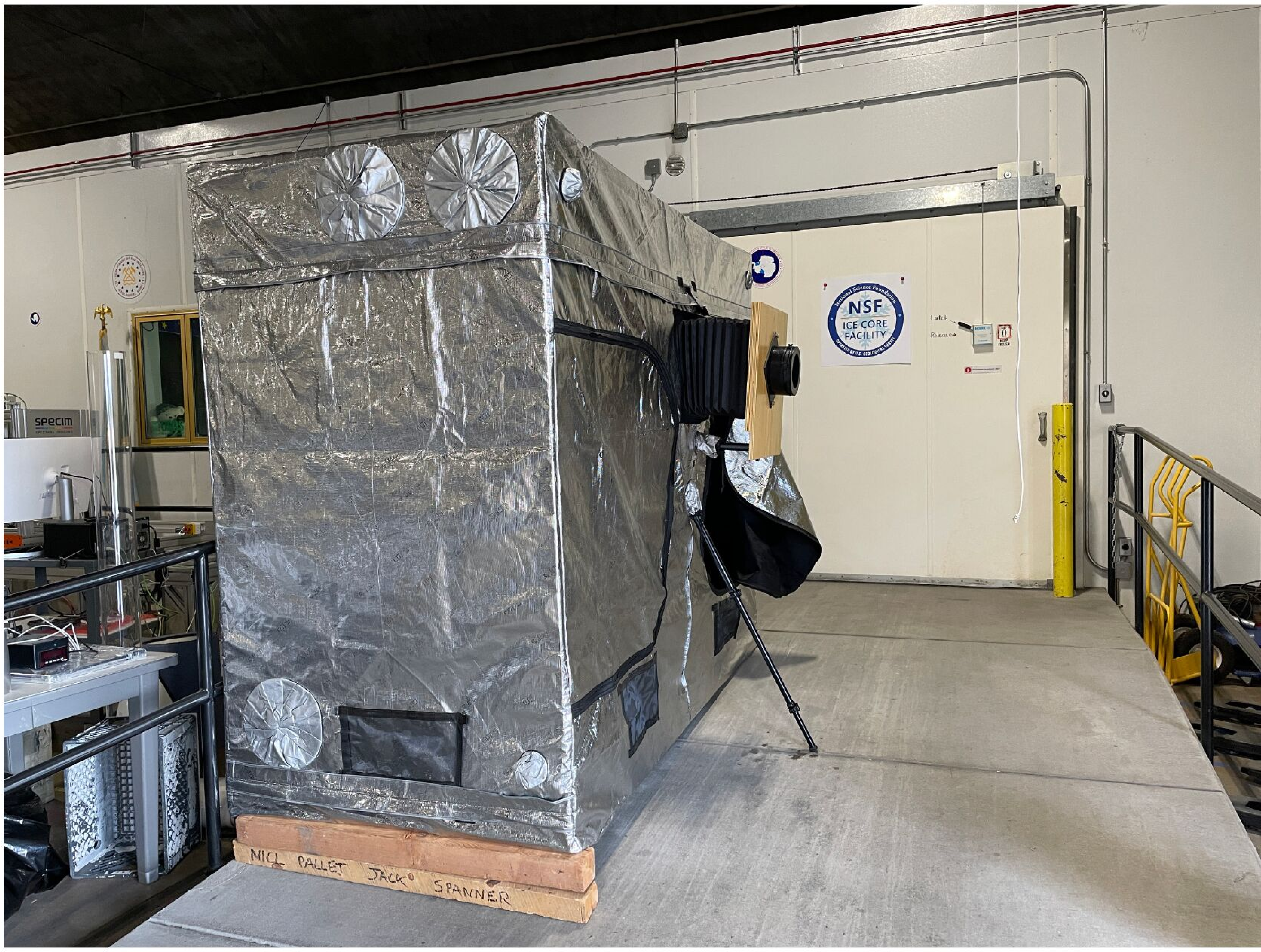
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All images © Tristan Duke | Process

© Tristan Duke I Series: Arctic Expedition- Life Boat at Dahlbreen Glacier, Svalbard 02 2022
Ice lens photograph, pigment print, 42 × 63 inches (106.7 × 160.02 cm)

About

Tristan Duke is a Los Angeles-based conceptual artist whose work explores perception, deep time, and human relationship to space and environment. Known for developing experimental techniques and building his own artist-technologies, he often engages directly with light as a medium –through immersive light and space installations. Blending interdisciplinary research with expeditionary fieldwork, much of Duke's work emerges through direct collaboration with scientists. Duke is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the LACMA Art + Technology Lab Grant, the Nevada Museum of Art Peter E. Pool Research Fellowship, and the CLIO Award. His work has been exhibited widely, including at SITE Santa Fe, LACMA, C/O Berlin, MASS MoCA, and numerous other venues. His book Glacial Optics was published by Radius Books in July of 2025.

www.tristanduke.com

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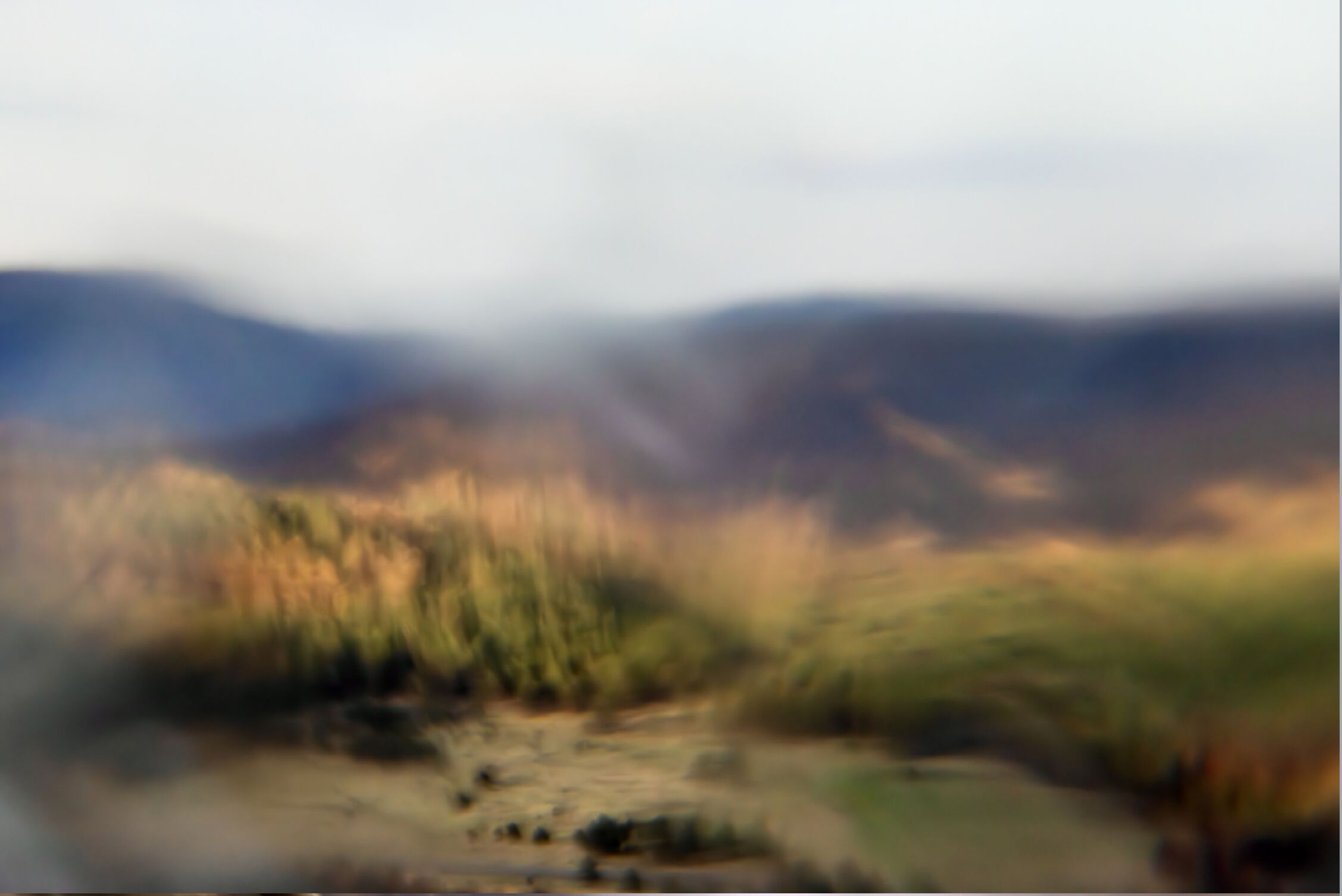
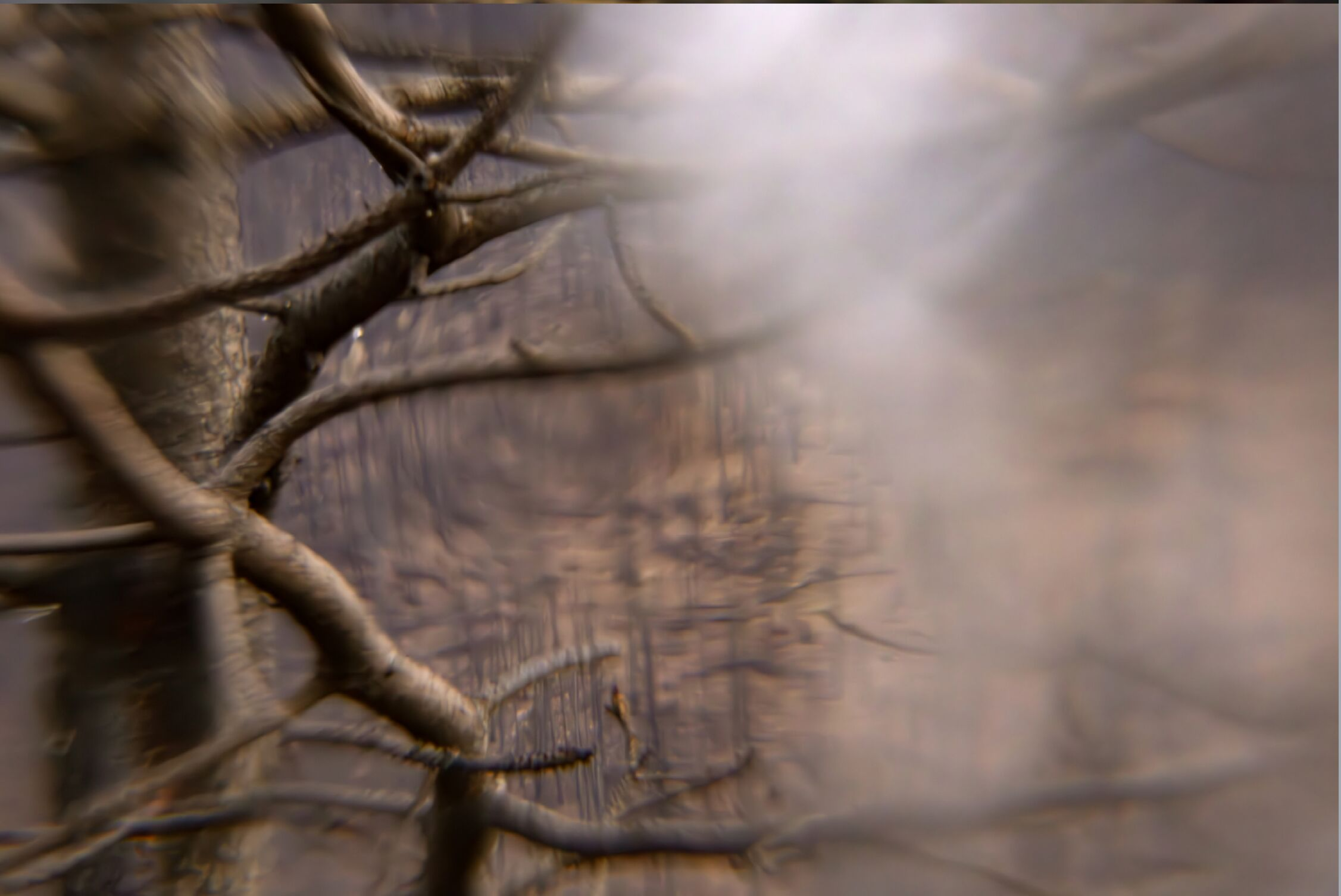


© Tristan Duke | Series: Fire and Ice - Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak Fire, New Mexico 10, 2022
Ice lens photograph, pigment print, 42 × 63 inches (106.7 × 160.02 cm)



© Tristan Duke | Series: Fire and Ice - Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak Fire, New Mexico 03, 2022
Ice lens photograph, pigment print, 42 × 63 inches (106.7 × 160.02 cm)

> With this project, I’m venturing into the world with this fragile, melting glacial ice lens.

- Tristan Duke

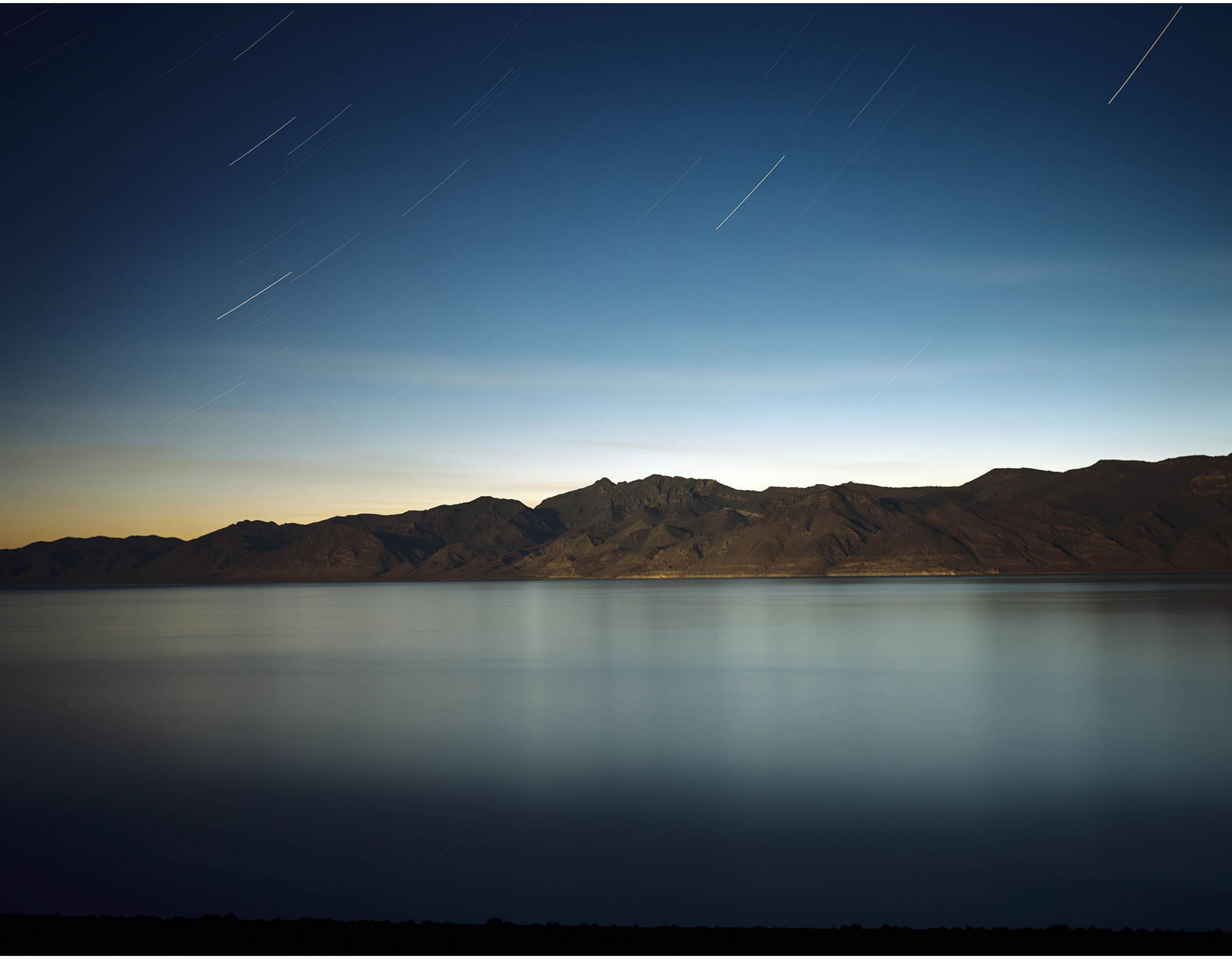
© Richard Misrach, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco
Golden Gate, 10.31.98, 4:32pm, 1998, pigment print

© Richard Misrach, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco
Nancy Holt, Sun Tunnels #3, 1988, pigment print

Rewind — Tracing the Artist's Five-Decade Career

Richard Misrach

Richard Misrach is one of the most influential photographers of his generation. A pioneer in the renaissance of colour photography, he is best known for his epic project on the deserts of the American West, exploring his unique perspective on humans' place in nature. By examining the social, political, environmental, and cultural aspects of the places he photographs, Misrach has broadened the traditional concept of landscape photography. His previous subjects include man-made floods and fires, military bombing ranges, isolated swimmers in vast oceans, sublime night skies, and details of paintings housed in museums across the Southwest.



© Richard Misrach, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco Pyramid Lake (at night), 2004, pigment print

In 1997, Richard Misrach moved into a new house in the Berkeley Hills overlooking the San Francisco Bay. His new home offered a stunning view, including the north shore of San Francisco, Angel Island, Alcatraz, the Marin headlands, and the Golden Gate Bridge. He was inspired by the spectacle of weather and light surrounding the Golden Gate Bridge. Over four years, he photographed the bridge from the same spot and vantage point under different weather conditions.

His process was methodical; each photograph was framed from the same position, with only weather conditions and light as variables. Over the next three years, Misrach took the same picture literally thousands of times. Individual photographs, however, record an astonishing variety of atmospheres and activities. Each image is titled after the date and time it was taken.

His work encompasses a long-term study of weather, time, colour, and light in Misrach's serial photographs of the Golden Gate. From a single, unchanging vantage point, the series captures the unpredictable complexity of light and weather. Misrach maintained this approach in *On The Beach*, an aerial perspective of isolation featuring the human figure and the infinite ocean, viewed from an unsettling viewpoint high above the scene. In recent years, he has revisited the exact location in Hawaii, documenting how humans embrace the danger and beauty of the sea. In *The Mysterious Opacity of Other Beings*, Misrach has depicted figures in ambiguous poses on the beach or in the water.

Desert Cantos is Misrach's longest-running project, now encompassing 41 cantos—a term Misrach borrowed from epic poetry to describe discrete parts of the series. Over more than forty years, Misrach has published several books focused on particular themes of the series, including a 1987 catalogue from the University of New Mexico Press, featuring this image on its cover.

In 1998, the High Art Museum in Atlanta commissioned Misrach to create a body of work situated in the South, and he returned to the area in 2010.

> “Beauty can be a very powerful conveyor of difficult ideas.
>
> - Richard Misrach

© Richard Misrach, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco Sounion (With Star Trails),1979, pigment print

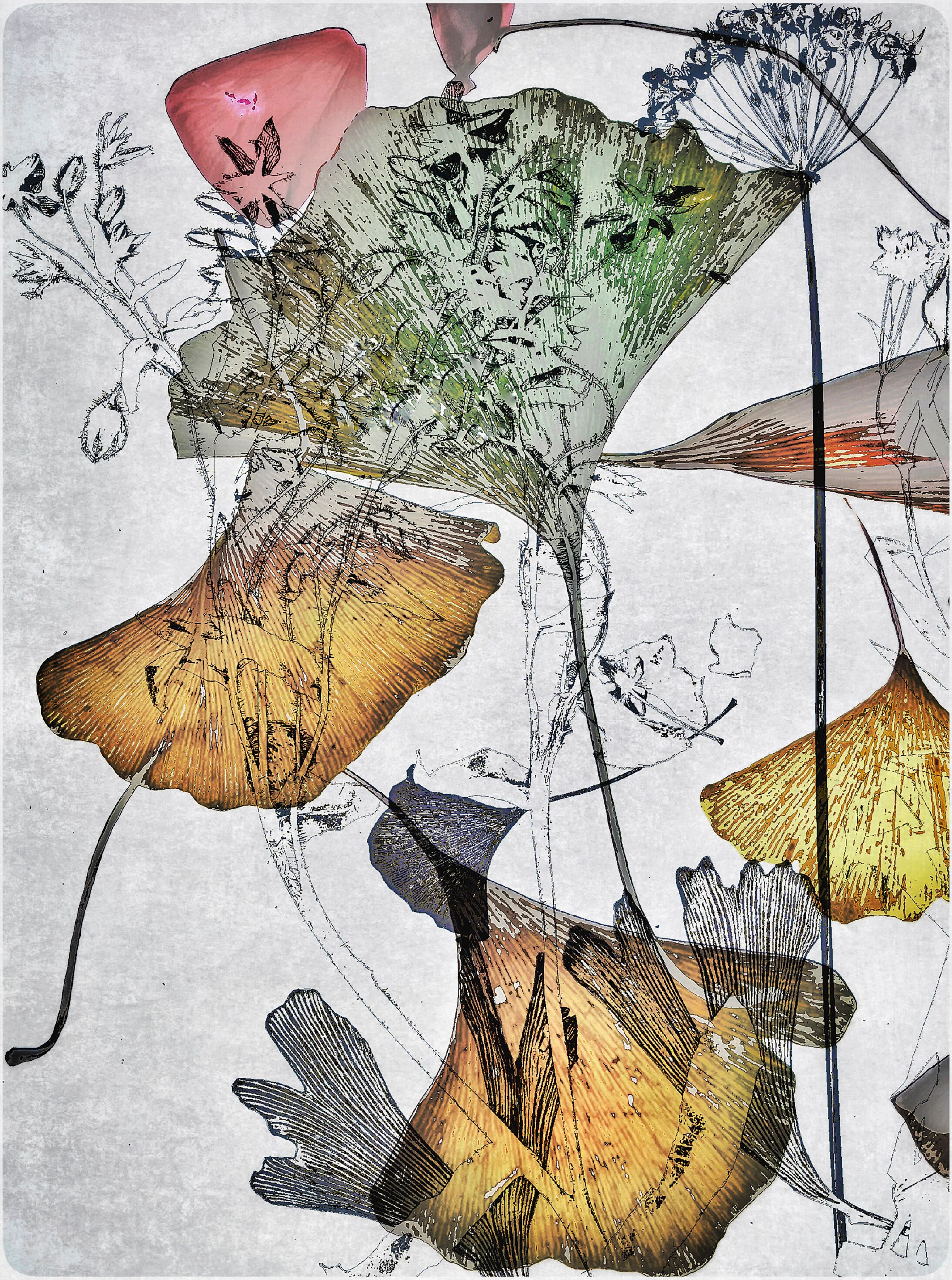
Published by Aperture in 2012, *Petrochemical America* joins Misrach's photographs of Louisiana's Chemical Corridor with landscape architect Kate Orff's Ecological Atlas—a series of speculative drawings developed through the mapping of data from the region. Their joint effort depicts and unpacks the complex cultural, physical, and economic ecologies along 150 miles of the Mississippi River, an area of intense chemical production that first drew public attention as "Cancer Alley" after unusual cancer rates were discovered there.
Misrach's best photographs strike an anxious balance between visual pleasure and socio-political observation. The visual field of this landscape is full of such disruptive information: the derelict jetty in the foreground, the awful commercial strip of the marina occasionally emerging from the haze. Dissonant episodes emerge from the matrix in their large exhibition format - headlights crossing the bridge, plush houses in Marin - but these details don't stick. *"It's hard for art to really solve problems but I've come to believe that art is an important way of communicating, not only with current generations, but future generations." - Richard Misrach*

About

A champion of colour photography since the 1970s, Misrach is known for his poignant, large-scale images that lean into social, political, and environmental issues of the present while also engaging with the history of photography. Subjects for his work have included desert fires, nuclear test sites, and animal burial pits in the American West; San Francisco's iconic Golden Gate Bridge; and the landscape of the US-Mexico border. In his radiant, contemplative works, Misrach—who lives and works in Berkeley, California—often examines the destructive effects of human intervention in the natural world.

Richard Misrach: Rewind, October 30 – December 30, 2025

fraenkelgallery.com/artists/richard-misrach



© Laurie Peek | The Way Home

The Way Home

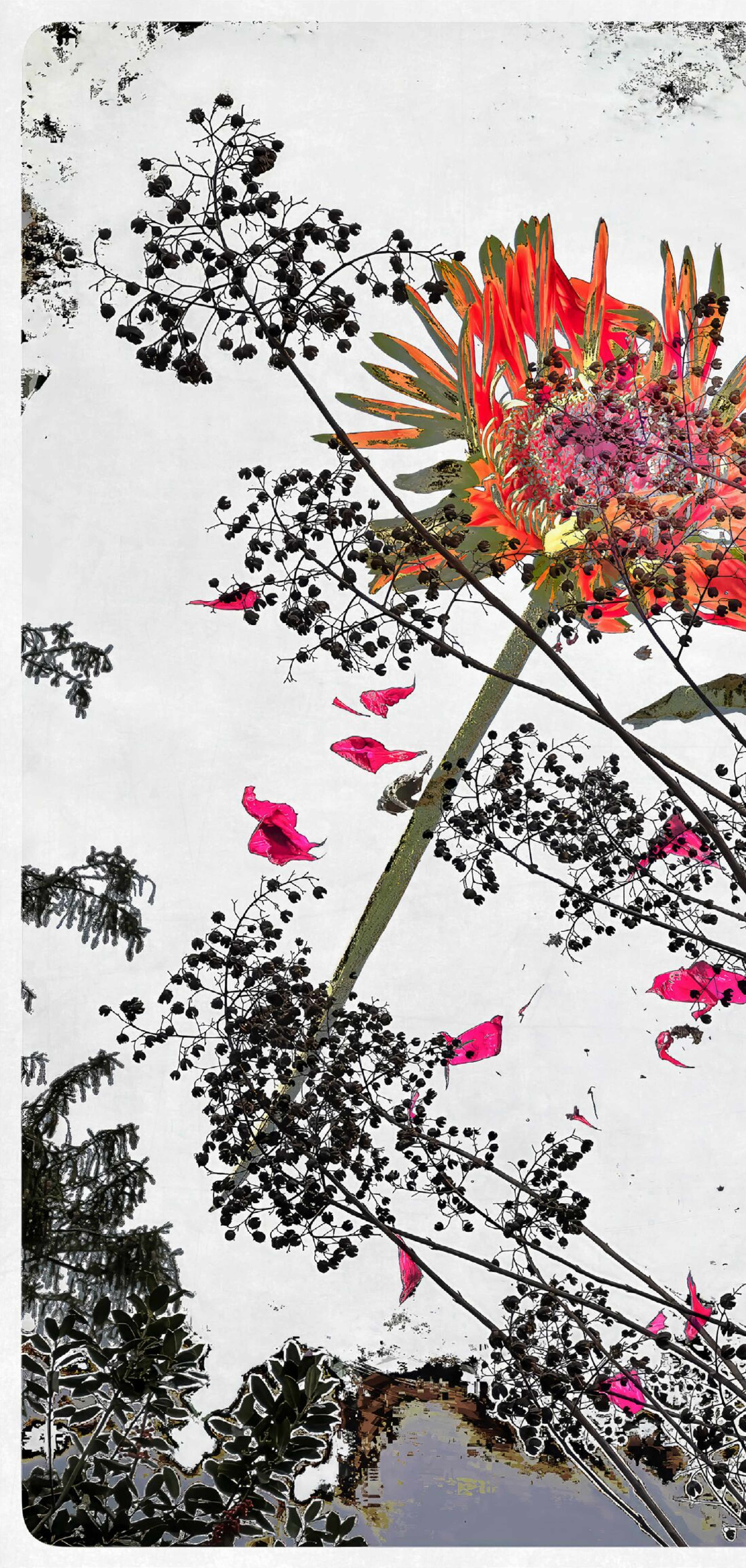
Laurie Peek

In *The Way Home*, Laurie Peek transforms personal loss into a luminous meditation on remembrance, healing, and renewal. Created as a continuation of her ongoing *In Lieu of Flowers* series, the work navigates grief with quiet resolve, drawing on abstraction, layered imagery, and the sustaining presence of the natural world. Floral forms—often sourced from the artist's own garden—become vessels for memory, resilience, and hope. Peek's meticulous process, combining digital composites with hand-applied gilding on translucent vellum, lends each work a devotional quality while reaffirming the value of craft. The series stands as both an elegy and an affirmation, marking an evolving journey towards light, meaning, and emotional restoration.

“*The Way Home* is dedicated to my son Jackson and to others I have known whose funeries I was unable to attend. It is also for all those who have suffered the loss of a loved one. This work forms a second chapter in my In Lieu of Flowers series, which is both healing me and intended to help heal others. With this memorial project, I draw on my long-standing fascination with layers, abstraction, ambiguity and the natural world. Working with floral elements, mostly from my garden, I express gratitude for plants as ever-renewing life forms that ultimately provide sustenance for everything on the planet.

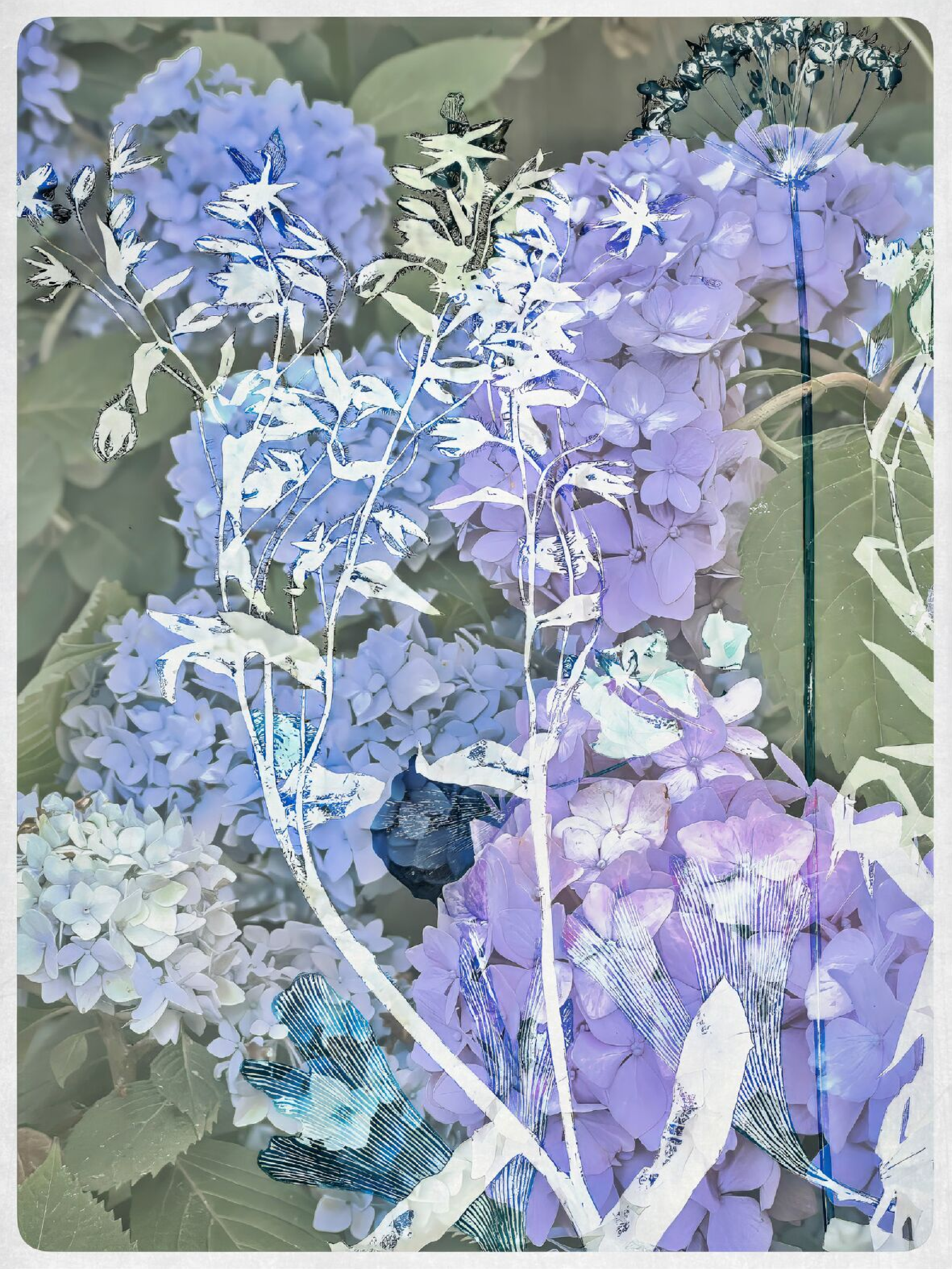
The images are digital composites, produced as archival pigment prints on semi-translucent vellum. Hand-applied gold and silver metallic-leaf gilding on the reverse of each print creates a shimmering glow evocative of sacred art. The methodical process of rubbing in the gilding and varnishing the finished works reconnects me with the craft of film photography and ensures that each piece is unique.

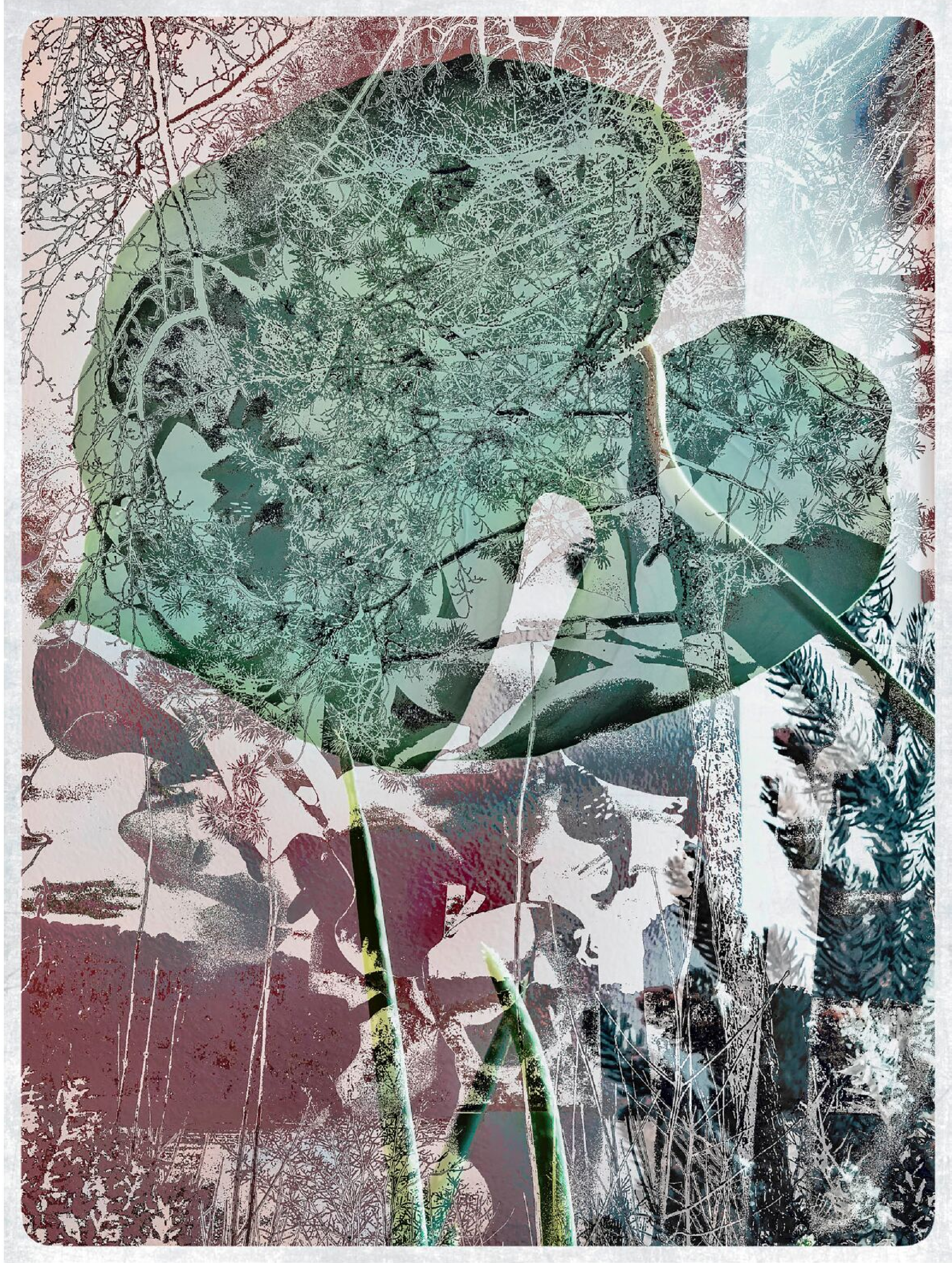
As my practice evolves, the images are becoming more abstract and affirmative, characterised by lighter tones and layered contrasts of black and white with colour. Honouring my losses while celebrating the memories of those who have passed has given me a renewed sense of purpose and agency. These images trace the path of my journey home.



All images © Laurie Peek | The Way Home

All images © Laurie Peek I The Way Home





About

Laurie Peek is a visual artist based in Tappan, United States, with over twenty-five years of experience in photography. She holds an MFA in Photography from the Visual Studies Workshop/SUNY Buffalo and has worked as an educator, photo librarian, photojournalist, and award-winning fine artist. Peek's photography has been widely exhibited across the United States and internationally, including at Klompching Gallery's Fresh 2024; the International Garden Photographer of the Year 2024 at the Cambridge University Botanic Garden, UK; and Photolucida's Critical Mass 2023. Her work has been published and reviewed in print and online, including in Artdoc Magazine, Fraction Magazine, A Photo Editor, Lenscratch, and The Photo Review.

www.lauriepeek.com

Expressive Nature Colours

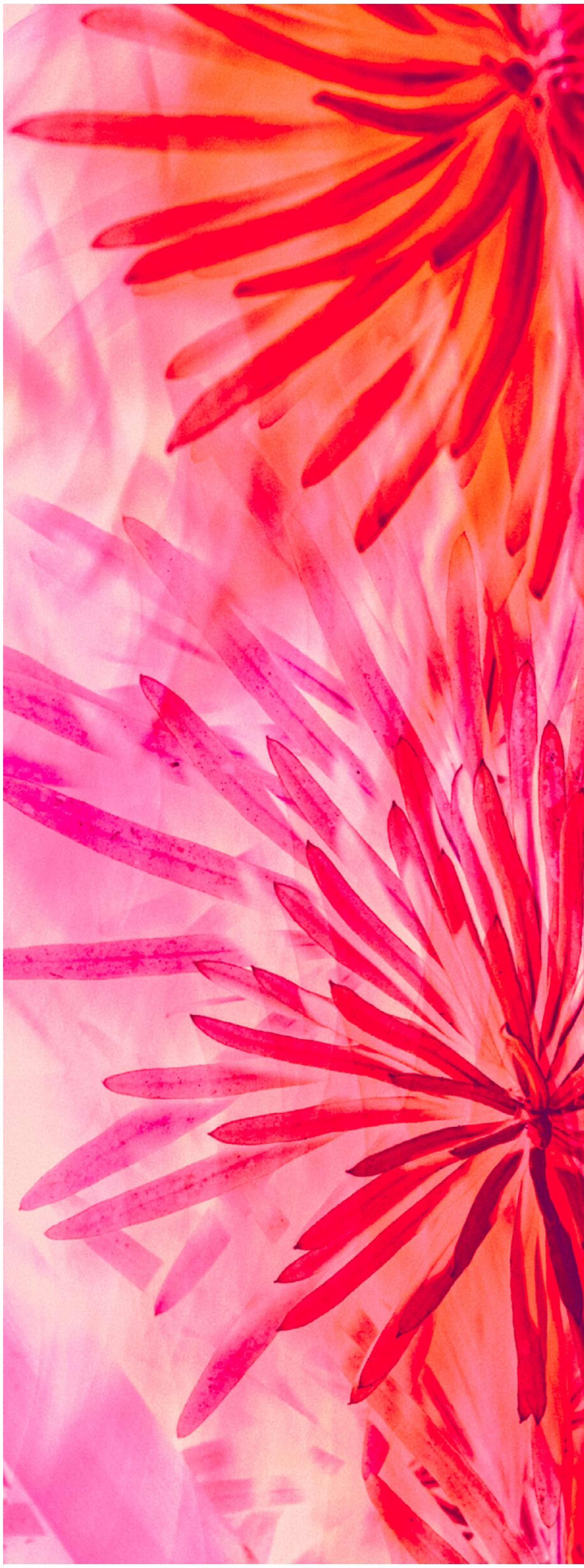
Ekaterina Tsurkina-Appina

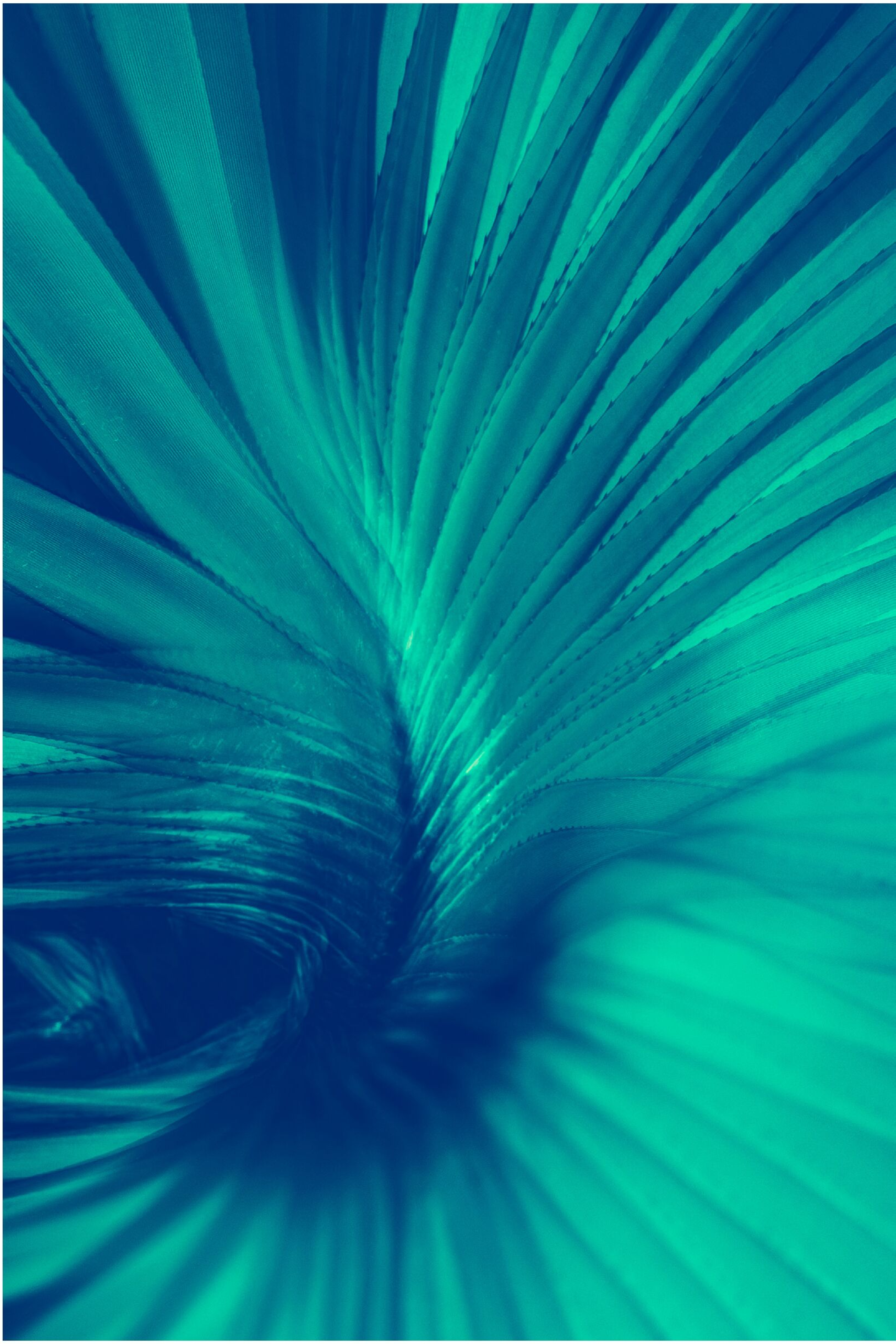
> “My subject matter is the capture of this world’s beauty, drawing with a camera, feelings, intuition, different forms of knowledge, and some preparation. Whether it is a traditional portrait, design photography, a portrait of a flower in the rays of light, or an ordinary pumpkin in a surreal representation, I use standard methods and materials, any sources of light, and have a particular fondness for portable flash. My passion lies in juggling colours, textures, textiles, and reflective surfaces to catch an attractive sense of movement and ease, making the lines dance and sing.

About

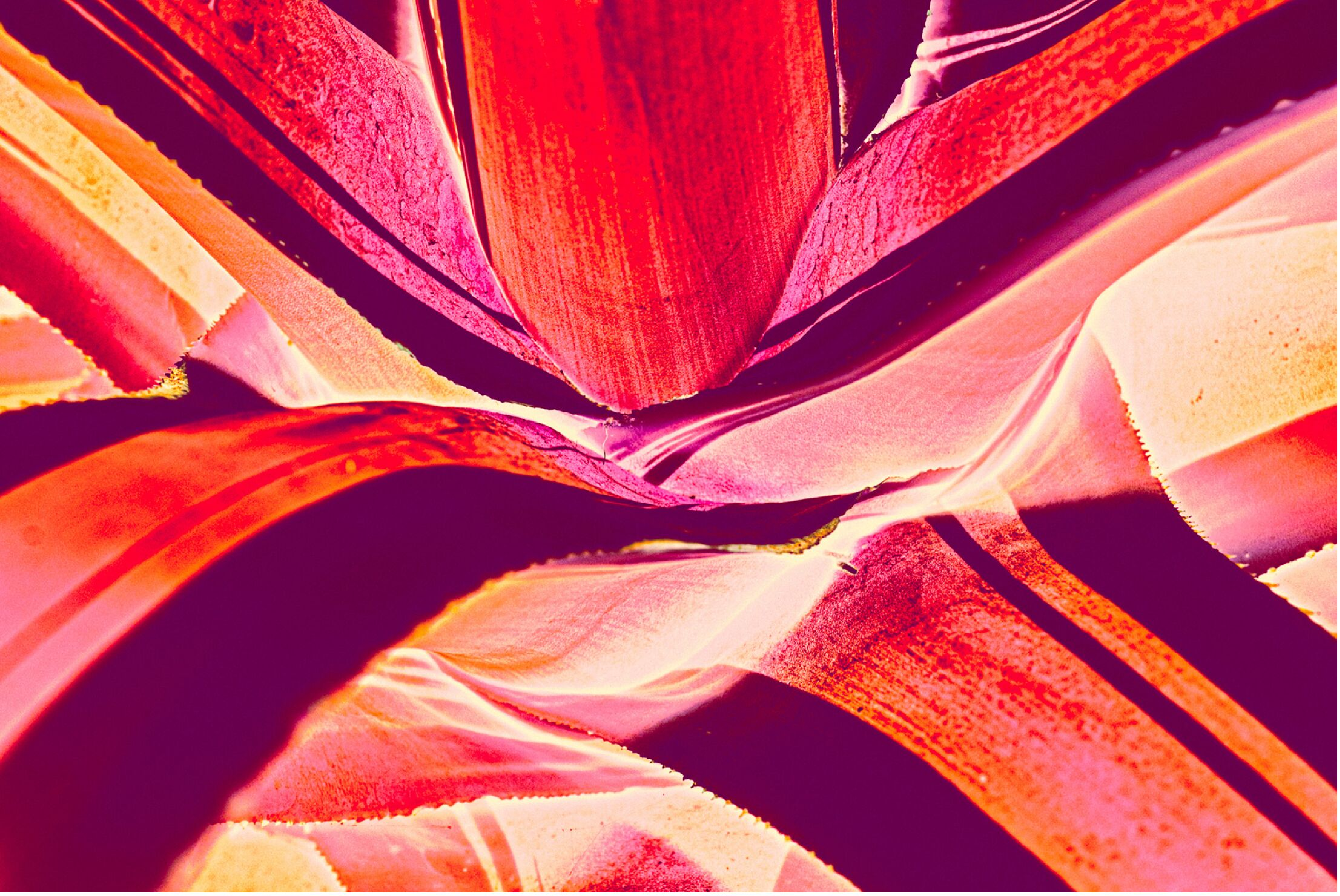
Ekaterina was born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in 1983. At the age of 18, she moved to Moscow. There, she followed a contrasting path, from Specialist to Head of Financial Departments, and later a career from wardrobe costumier to costume designer in film productions and the circus. Throughout her life, Ekaterina has found her own way to understand her value to the world. It was only after moving to Canada two years ago that she decided to buy a camera and began learning photography. Her pictures encompass contrast, documentary, reportage, and art photography, with a play of light, colour, and line, akin to an impressionist or a surrealist artist.

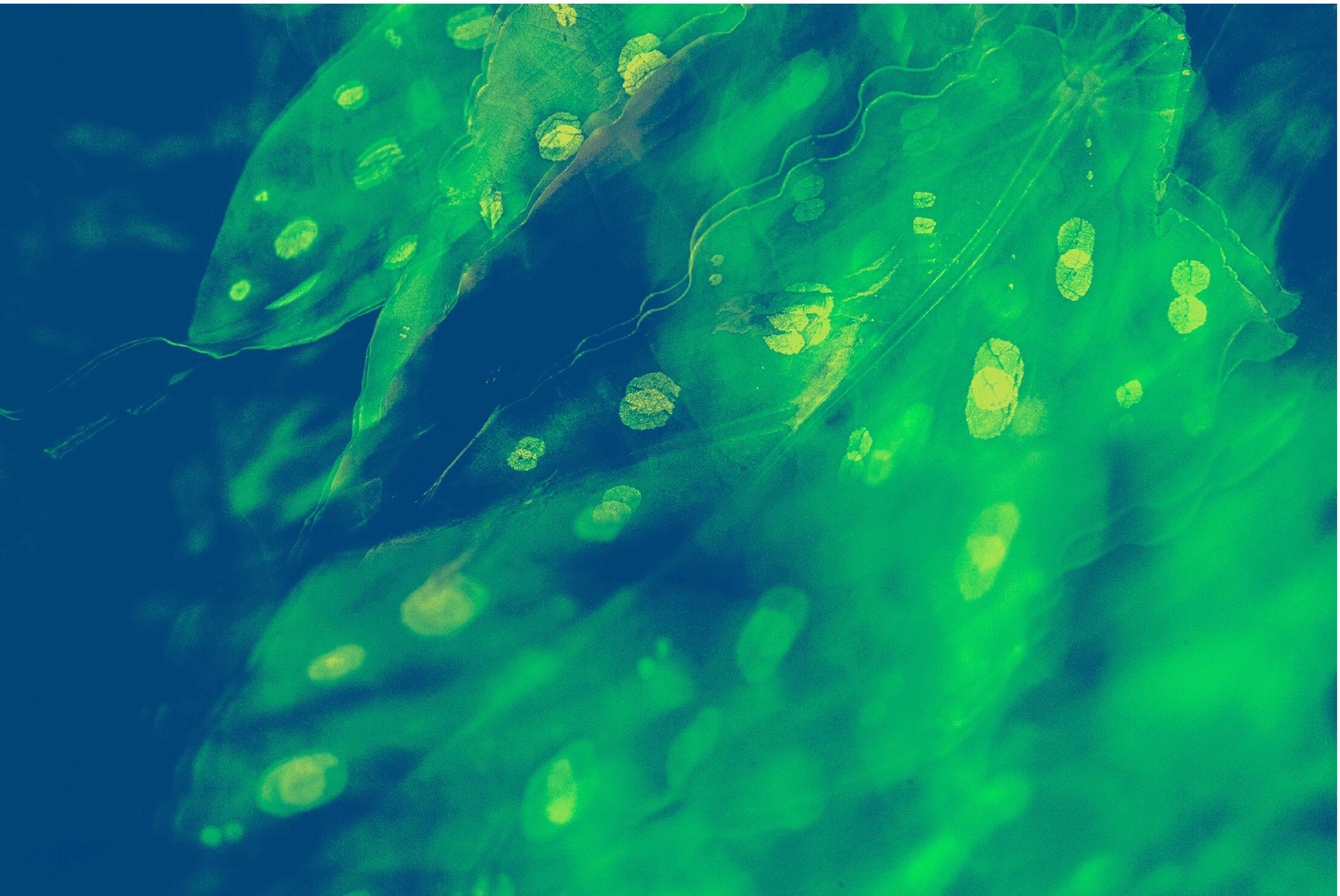
www.ekaterinatsurkinaappina.com





All images © Ekaterina Tsurkina-Appina | Expressive Nature Colours





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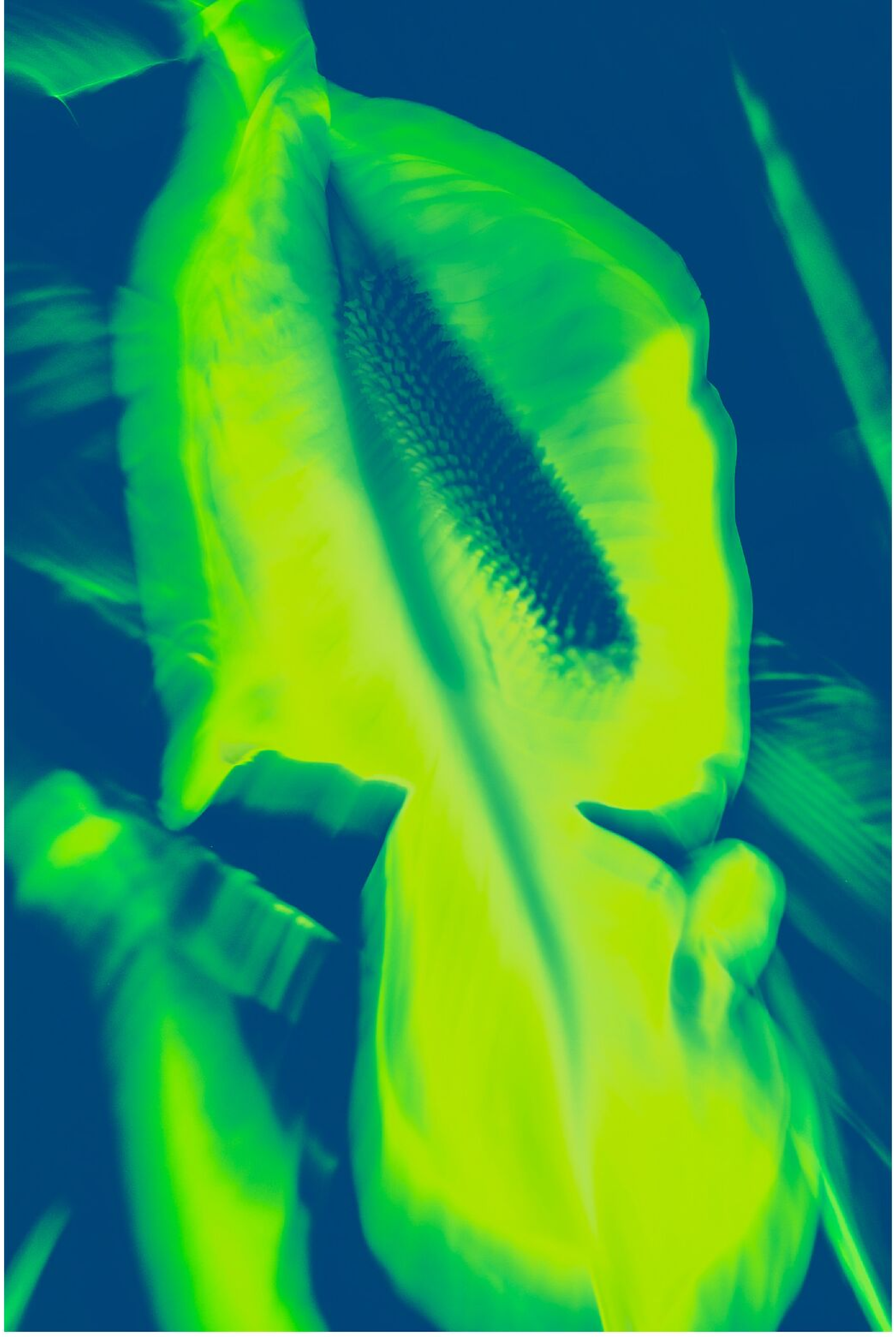
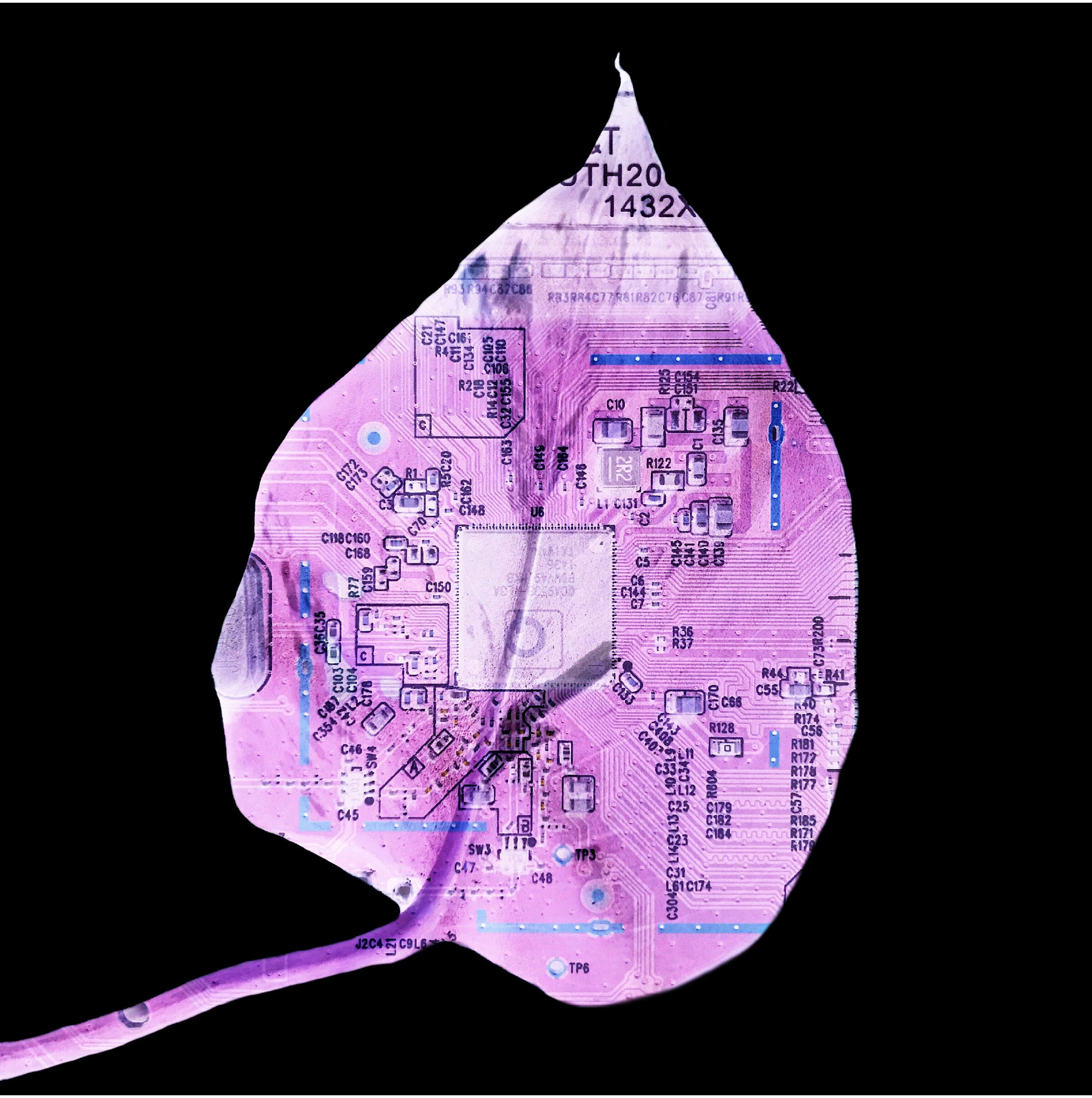


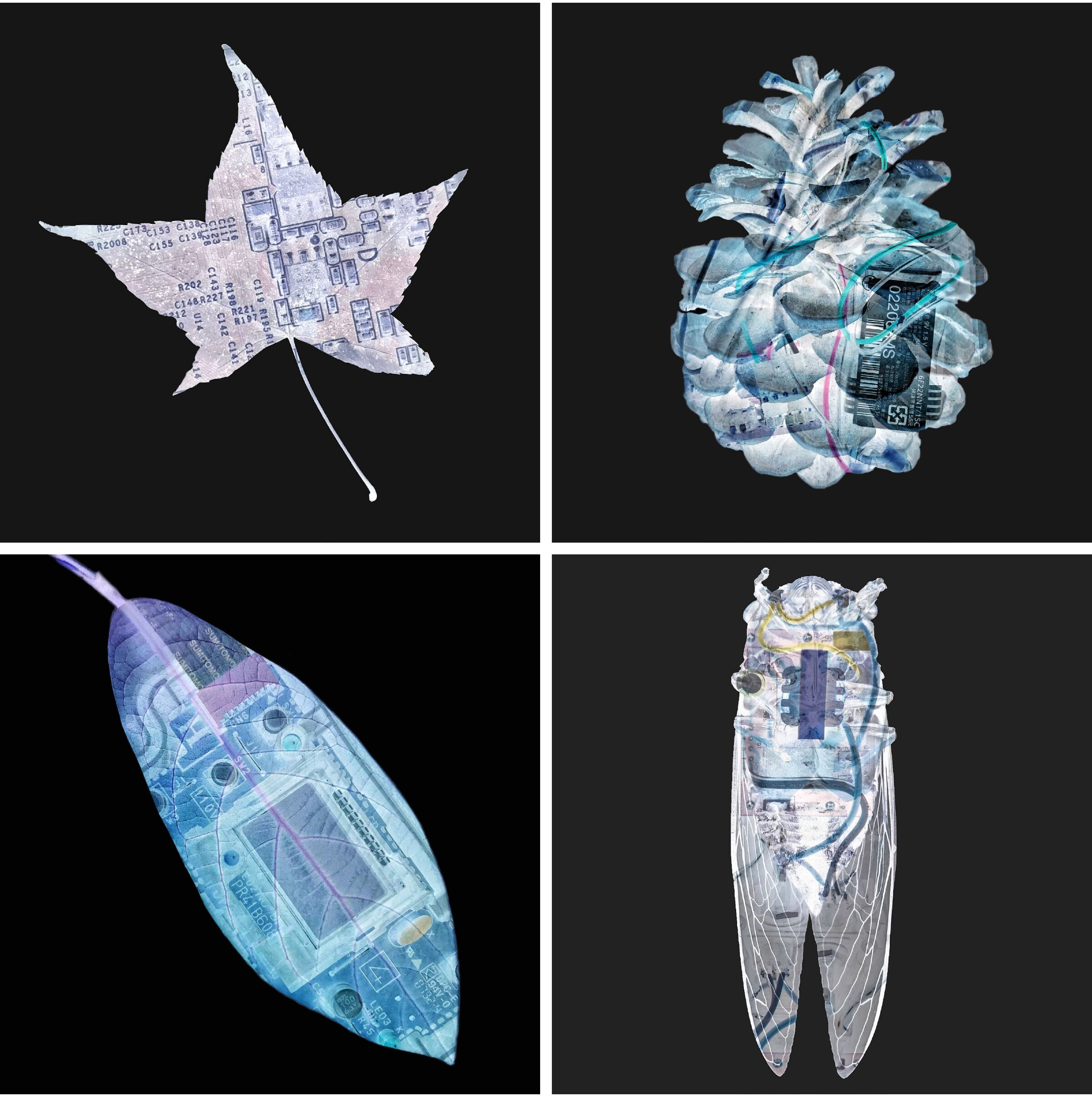


© Tsung-yu Lu | Be - Chapter I

Finding balance between logic and feeling

Tsung-yu Lu

Tsung-yu Lu's photography emerges from a sustained negotiation between opposing forces: rational structure and emotional intuition, scientific thinking and artistic impulse, memory, and abstraction. Working primarily through inverted imagery, his practice questions how photographs are constructed, perceived, and remembered, while remaining grounded in a desire for visual calm and balance. What begins as a deeply personal attempt to preserve fleeting moments evolves into a broader inquiry into the nature of images themselves. Across several interconnected series, Lu develops a visual language that is simultaneously analytical and sensorial, inviting viewers to reconsider not only what they see, but how they understand photography's boundaries and possibilities. "Finding balance amidst the contradiction and conflict between rationality and sensibility is the summary of my creative concept."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All images © Tsung-yu Lu | Be - Chapter I

Tsung-yu Lu describes his artistic foundation not as a harmonious starting point, but as a tension that has shaped his thinking from the outset. "I am a man of science and engineering, yet I cannot abandon artistic creation; this contradiction between rationality and sensibility has invisibly shaped my creative thinking." That internal conflict is not resolved by choosing one side over the other. Instead, it becomes the engine of the work. Within that subversion, Lu finds a method that resonates with his own sensibility. "Inverted images have long been a subject of my photographic exploration. This theme is virtually uncharted territory in the realm of photographic creation, but more importantly, it can be considered a manifestation of my inner state."

Lu's attraction to inverted images reflects this search for equilibrium, not only as a visual strategy but as a psychological mirror. "The characteristic of inverted images lies in that it utilises the computational logic of black-and-white opposition and colour complementarity to completely subvert our conventional visual experience."

Photography as personal archive

Despite the conceptual rigour of his work, Lu's relationship with photography began in an unexpectedly pragmatic way. "Since I have a poor memory, my initial reason for taking up photography was to preserve memories. Therefore, I never specifically travel to capture popular scenes. Most of my work involves taking pictures spontaneously wherever I go, or utilising everyday objects as image material."

In recent projects, this impulse has become more explicit through the inclusion of written annotations. "I even try to write down things that were happening in my life at the time for each photograph, or keywords related to that scene. Storytelling plays the role of a 'memory anchor' in my work. For me, these personal notes ensure that the images can clearly point to a specific moment on my personal timeline in the future, granting them a more complete and private archival significance."

Learning to see through colour

Lu's visual language did not emerge from formal training in art, but through sustained experimentation and gradual discovery. He identifies two distinct phases in this development, each leaving a lasting imprint on his work. "The first stage began when I started photography with film cameras. I experimented with various types of film and processing methods and discovered my preference for colour palettes like red-scale and cross-processing, developing positive film in negative chemistry." These experiments were formative, shaping his sensitivity to chromatic relationships.

A later shift towards generative art introduced a different set of challenges and influences. "The second stage happened after I started engaging with generative art. Unlike photography, which is essentially subtractive, generative art is fundamentally additive, much like painting, creating something out of nothing. This requires a much higher command of colour. To improve this skill, I began deliberately viewing more painting works and discovered that I was more drawn to abstract works focused purely on composition and colour."

His preference for restrained palettes persisted. "As for colour schemes, likely influenced by my photography background, I also clearly favour natural and earth tones." These influences converge in his recent work. "My recent series, *Alaksana*, largely reflects these recent preferences for both abstraction and earth tones."

Nature and technological language

Across Lu's images, specific motifs appear with particular frequency. "I love trees, and I enjoy photographing them, so they are probably the most frequently appearing subject in my work." Their role emerged through chance. "The initial impulse to experiment with inverted images actually began when I was scanning film: I unexpectedly noticed that some photos of trees looked arguably better in their inverted, negative state, compared to the final positive image." From there, his material expanded. "In subsequent work, my image material extended from trees to other natural elements, such as leaves, grass, rocks, and so on." In the *Be* series, these natural forms are no longer isolated. Leaves appear cut cleanly from darkness, their silhouettes filled with dense networks of circuit traces, chips, and solder points, as if organic matter has absorbed the internal logic of machines.

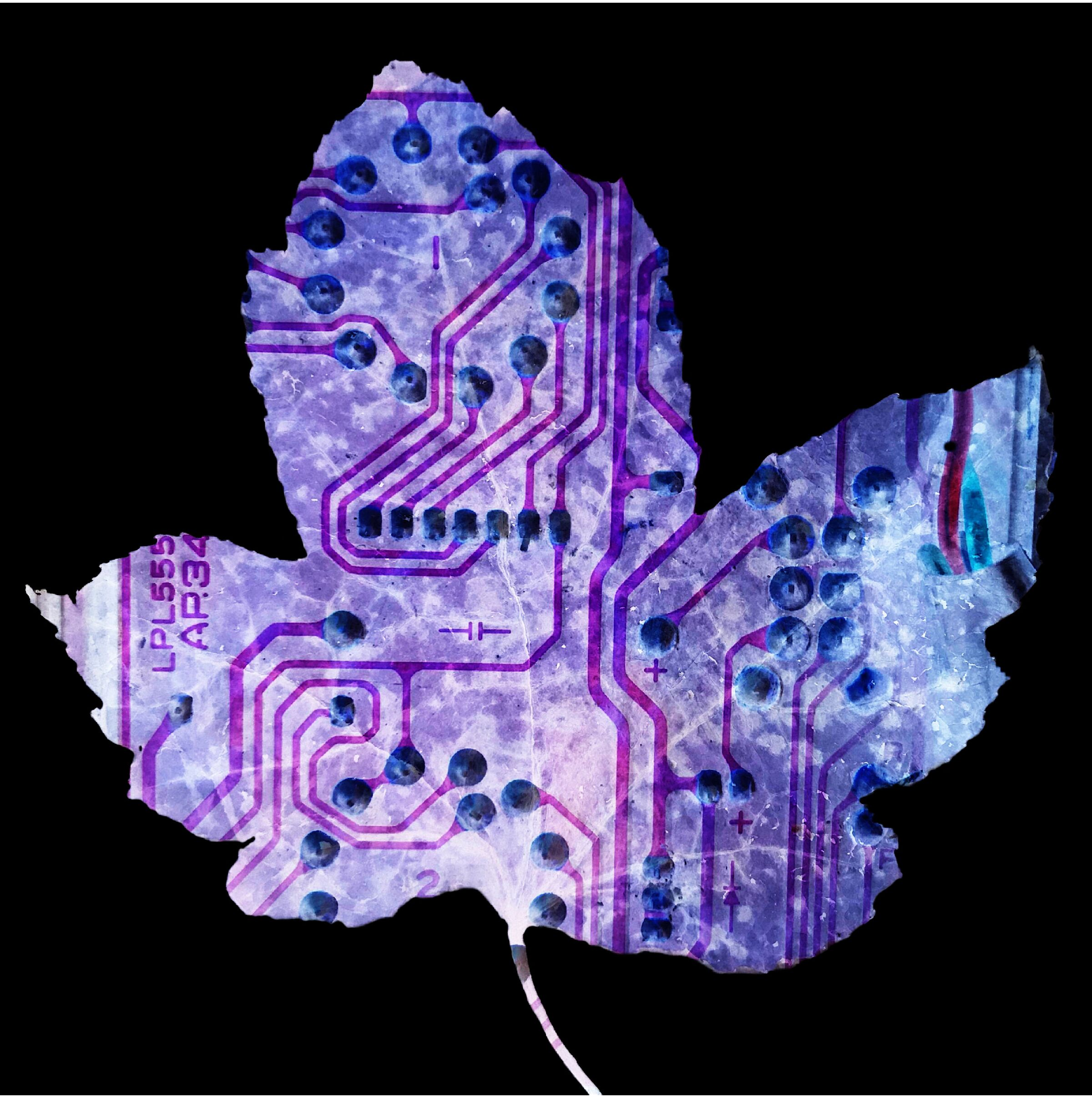
In his other works, clusters of foliage spread across fields of circuitry, creating compositions that resemble aerial views of motherboard cities—ordered, layered, and quietly intricate. The distinction between plant structure and electronic architecture becomes deliberately unstable, with veins and conductive paths visually echoing one another. These elements carry symbolic weight. "Beyond being suitable for inverted presentation, I believe these natural elements also serve as a symbolic form for my sensibility." In contrast, technological imagery stands in for rationality. "I deliberately used electrical circuits and related subject matter as the symbol for my rationality and attempted to combine the two, presenting the concept of my ongoing effort to let these two aspects coexist and mutually flourish in my life."

Structure, light, and inversion

Formally, Lu's images are built upon restraint and order. "Regarding composition, I deliberately pursue symmetry and structural stability to satisfy my inner yearning for order." Light and colour are treated with similar care. "As for light and colour, I aim for sufficient dynamic range and contrast, yet avoid excessive dramatisation, ensuring the work possesses a serene, decorative quality."

Inversion remains central, both technically and conceptually. "In terms of special techniques, the inverted image processing method carries the mission of reconciling my inner contradiction between rationality and sensibility." His aim is not to estrange the image from reality entirely. "My goal is precisely to find a visual language in these strange and uncanny inverted images that can harmonise with the images of our 'real world.'"

> “ I deliberately used electrical circuits and related subject matter as the symbol for my rationality.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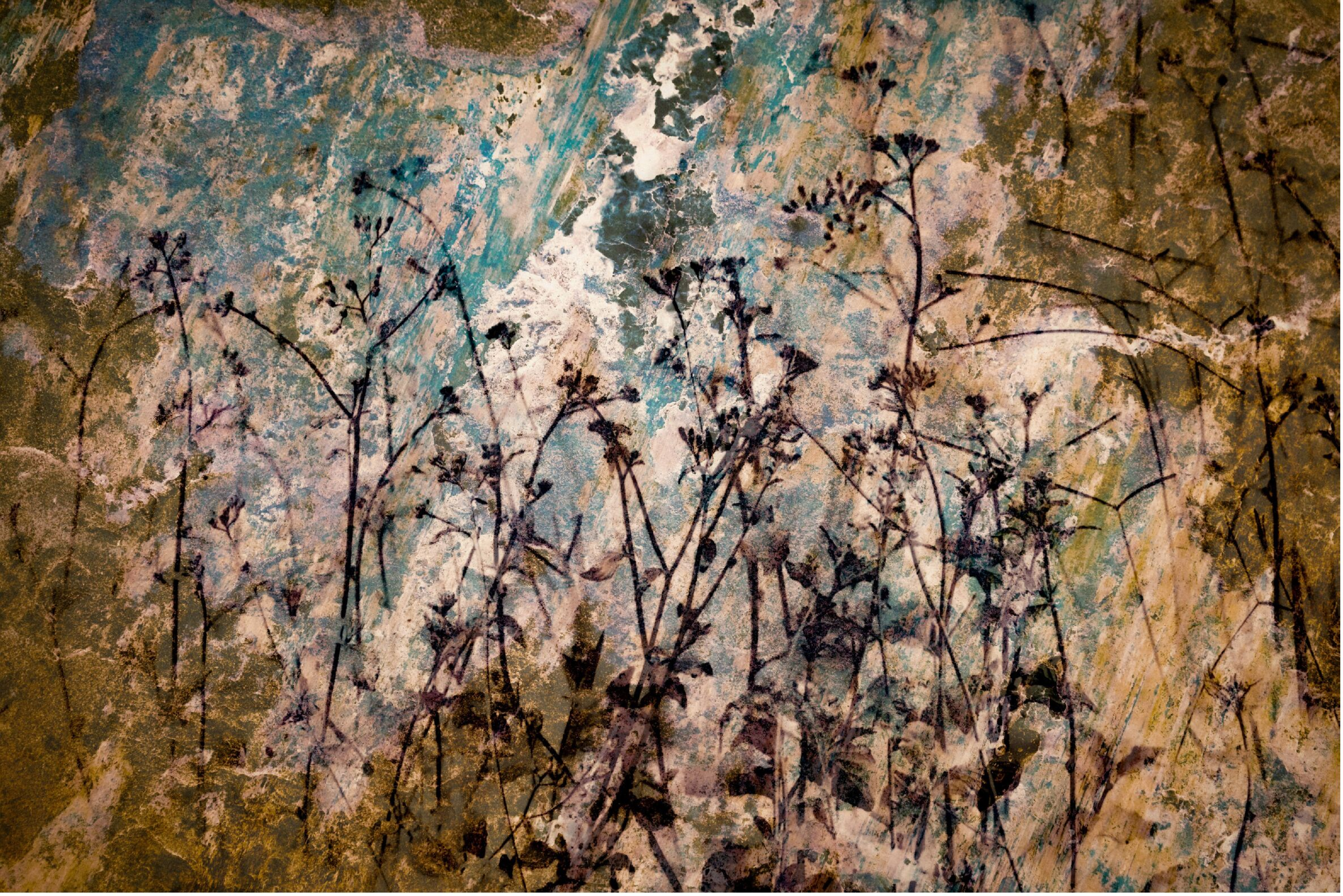


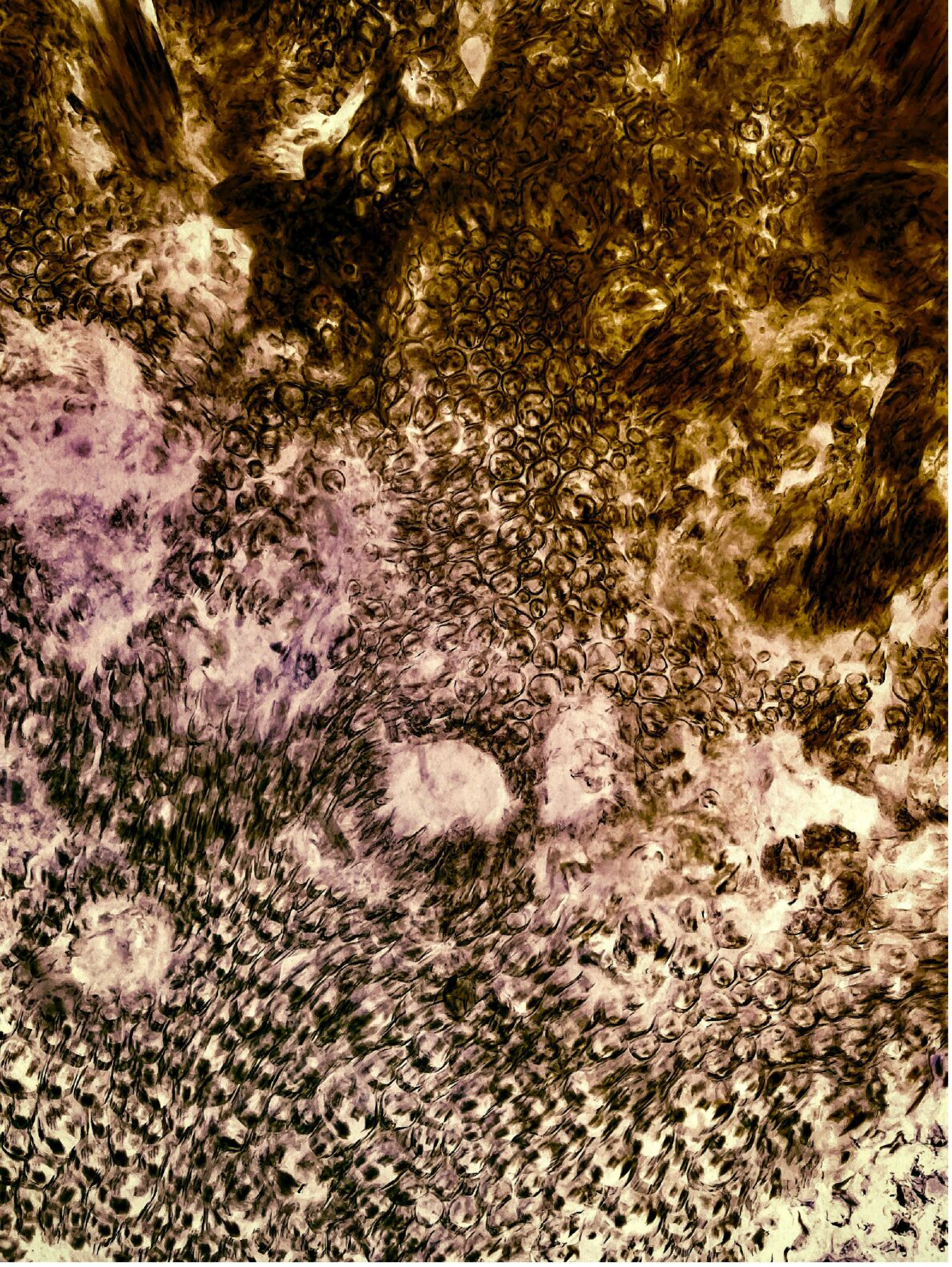
All images © Tsung-yu Lu | Alaksana

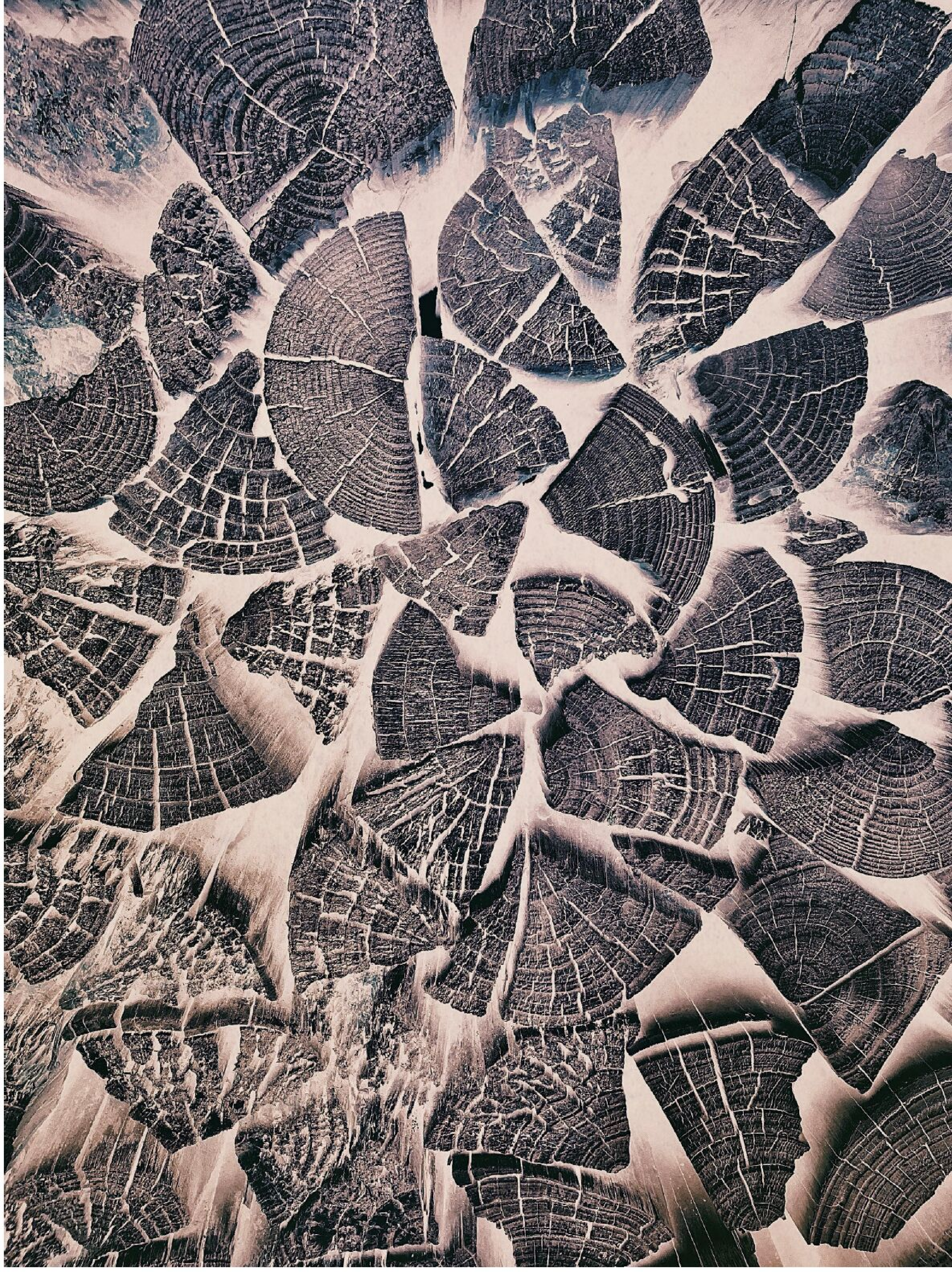
Calming influence of art

While Lu's work engages with complex conceptual questions, his aspirations for audience experience remain grounded in clarity and repose. He finds a close alignment with Henri Matisse's thinking. "Henri Matisse's description is very close to my thoughts on my work: 'What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter—a soothing, calming influence on the mind, rather like a good armchair which provides relaxation from physical fatigue.'" This ideal shapes his approach to individual images. "My ideal for every single piece is that it is suitable for hanging on a wall at home—the kind that one never tires of seeing every day." To achieve this, he attends carefully to formal balance. At the same time, inversion introduces an element of surprise that disrupts familiarity without overwhelming it. "Because inverted images are not something one sees in daily life, I also hope to bring a sense of novelty and freshness to first-time viewers." The result is work that invites prolonged looking rather than immediate interpretation.

Questioning the image

Lu is cautious about imposing explicit messages on his audience, yet his work inevitably opens space for reflection. "While I prioritise the decorative





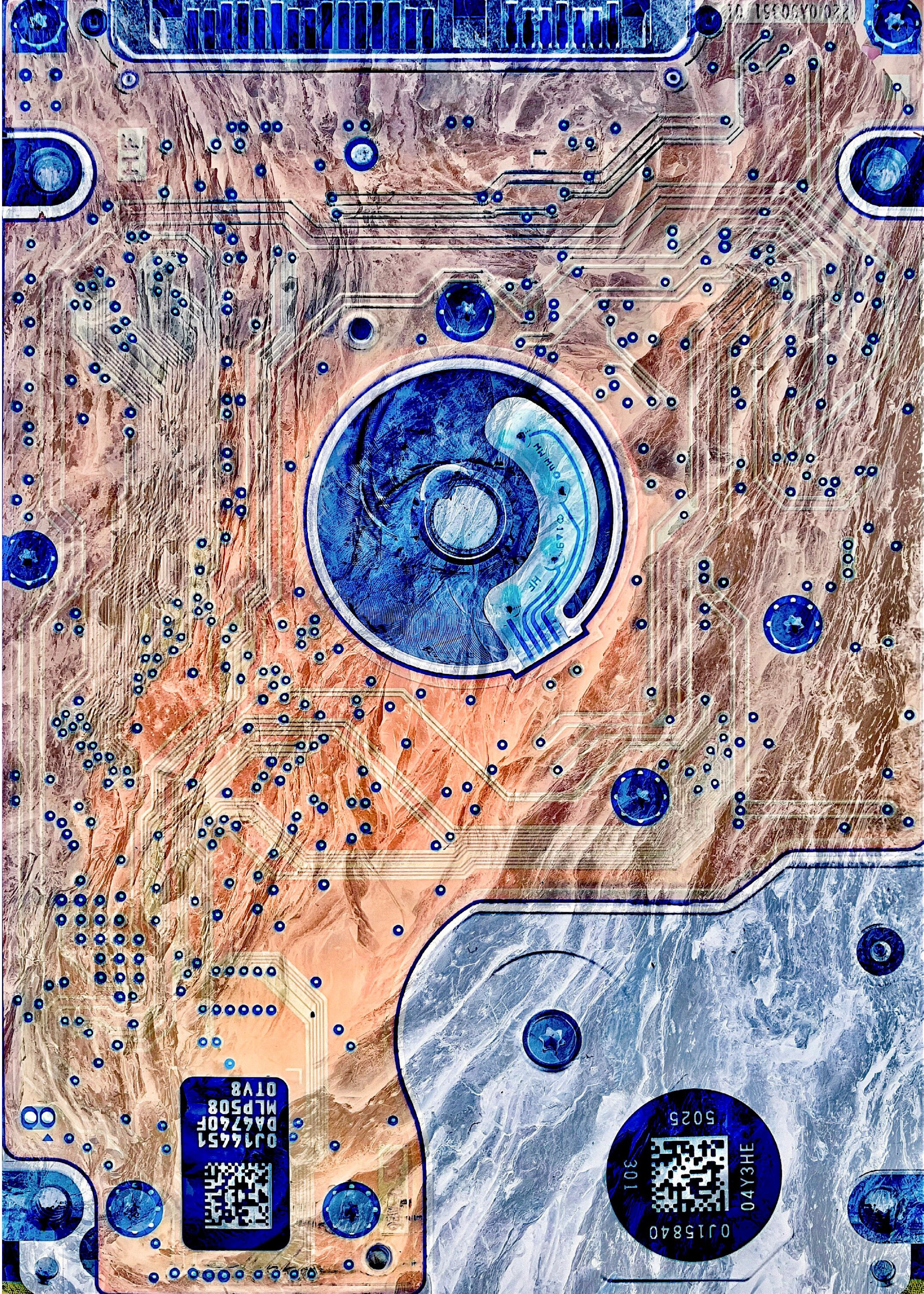
quality of my work over evoking the audience's attention to specific issues, my inverted image series can still offer a compelling question for further contemplation, should the viewer be willing: What is the nature of the image? Is it genuine, or is it illusory and unstable?"

These questions have accompanied his practice from early on. "What is photography? What is an image? These are questions I began constantly contemplating shortly after I started taking pictures." His reflections extend beyond linguistic definitions. "The word 'photography' literally means 'drawing with light,' which implies that photography is a form of painting. So, what precisely constitutes photography? Where are its boundaries? And if we move beyond linguistic context and remove those constraints of language, does that boundary still exist?"

Dualities without division

Although Lu resists overt social commentary, he recognises that his way of thinking inevitably carries broader implications. "I don't intentionally try to attribute a social or cultural significance to my photography. However, upon deeper reflection, one finds that my creative thinking itself offers a soft response to the current phenomenon of social dualities."

All images © Tsung-yu Lu I Be - Chapter II



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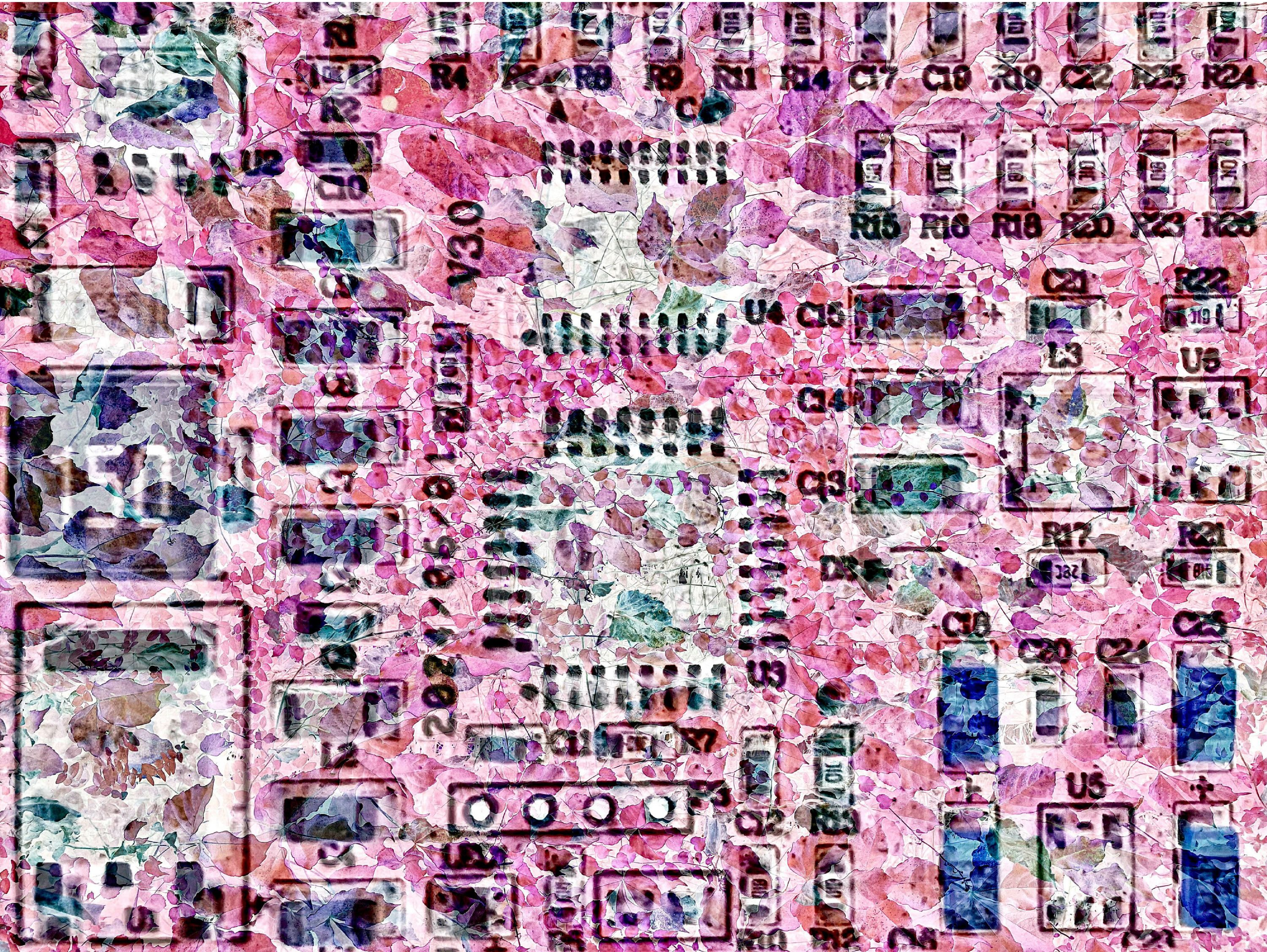
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At the centre of this response is coexistence rather than opposition. "The way my work influences dialogue primarily lies in exploring and demonstrating how rationality and sensibility can coexist and interact—this is the core theme." That perspective is rooted in lived experience. "My background as 'a man of science and engineering' naturally leads me to approach the world in a structured, logical way, while the emotional depth and spontaneity are provided by my initial motivation: starting to record life fragments out of frustration with fading memories."

Rather than reinforcing polarised positions, his work proposes a quieter alternative. "My photography might offer an alternative perspective to break down these rigid classifications, guiding viewers to understand and accept that these conflicts are not insurmountable." The conclusion he draws is deliberately restrained. "Building upon a foundation of reason and logic, what we often need, even more, is empathy."

Continuity and future directions

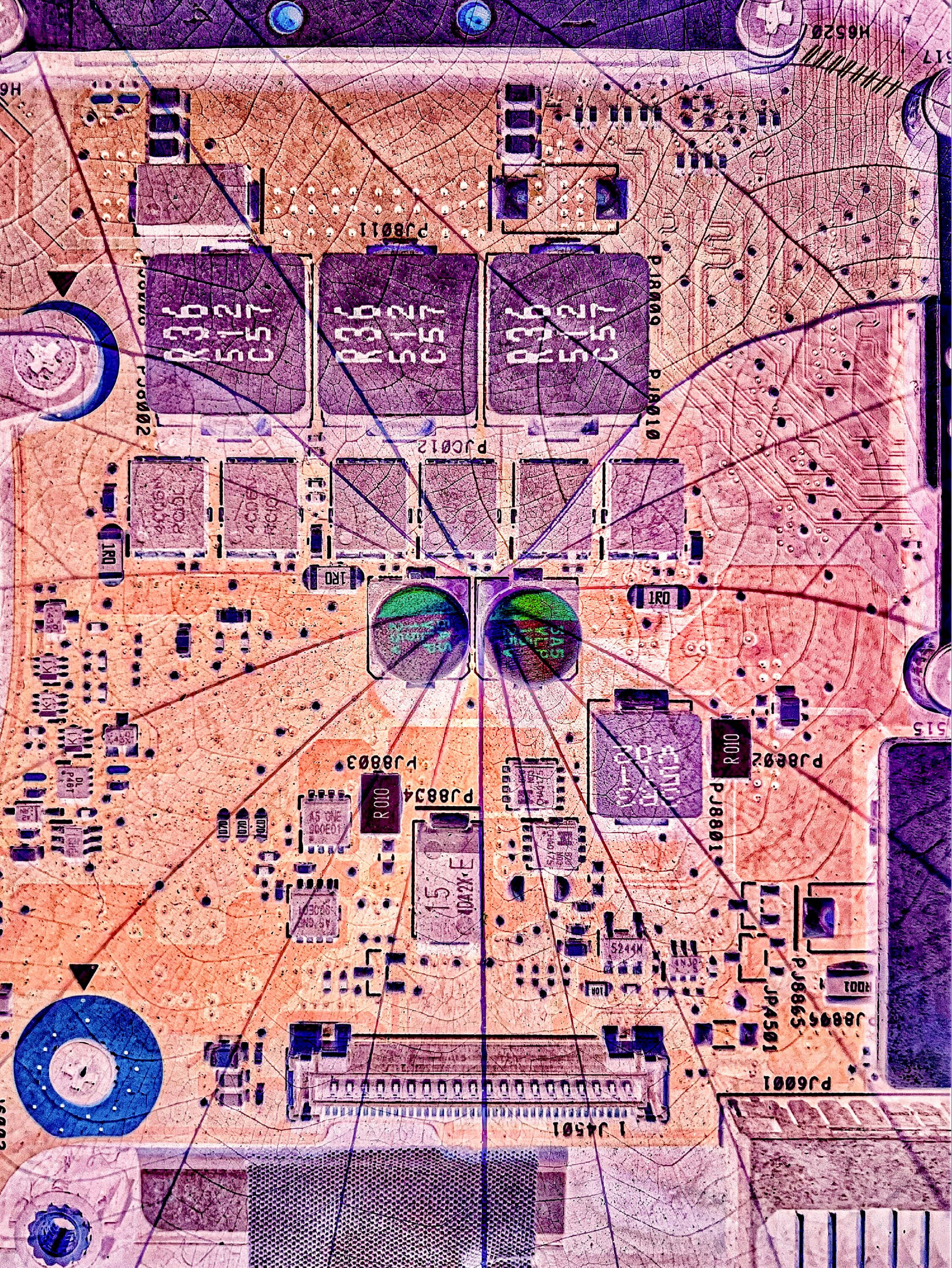
Looking ahead, Lu frames his practice as an ongoing line of development. "Across the series *White Night* and *Black Day*, *Be*, and *Alaksana*, although the visuals are drastically different, the underlying origin and spirit belong to a single lineage." His future remains open-ended but focused. "In the foreseeable future, I will likely continue exploring the foundational elements of *inversion* and *natural subject matter*."

Beyond that, a deeper integration beckons. In Lu's work, balance is not a static resolution but an ongoing practice—one that unfolds patiently, image by image, between logic and feeling. "What might truly excite me is the combination of photography and generative art." Should such a project take hold, his commitment is absolute. "Although I haven't conceived of a definitive subject yet, if I do, I would probably dive into it, forgetting to eat and sleep."

About

Tsung-yu Lu is a photographer and generative artist from Taiwan. He has been working with photography since 2013 and is particularly interested in exploring the essence of the medium and expanding the possibilities of images through specialised techniques. Since 2022, he has also engaged with generative art, creating subjects that are difficult to realise through traditional photographic methods. His work explores the ways in which rationality and sensibility both oppose and complement one another, and how this dynamic shapes his life and artistic practice.

www.lutsungyu.com



© Tsung-yu Lu | Be - Chapter II

“

Building upon a foundation of reason and logic, what we often need, even more, is empathy.

- Tsung-yu Lu

All images © Robert David Atkinson | A Silent Witness To Beauty

A Silent Witness To Beauty

Robert David Atkinson

> “Everything is worth observing, from the natural world to everyday objects, from the elegant flight of a songbird to the exploration of urban decay. Capturing these things in a photograph or sound recording, creating an image from nothing, has been my lifelong work and passion. I am always looking.

About

Robert David Atkinson is an American photographer based in New York City with over 35 years of experience in commercial still life, personal nature, and landscape photography. His fine art bird photography appeals to bird enthusiasts worldwide, capturing the ethereal and intangible beauty of birds. Atkinson’s debut book, A Silent Witness to Beauty, features bird imagery accompanied by short fictional narratives that extend beyond mere visual representation, immersing the viewer in the world and viewpoint of his subject.

www.robertdavidatkinson.com

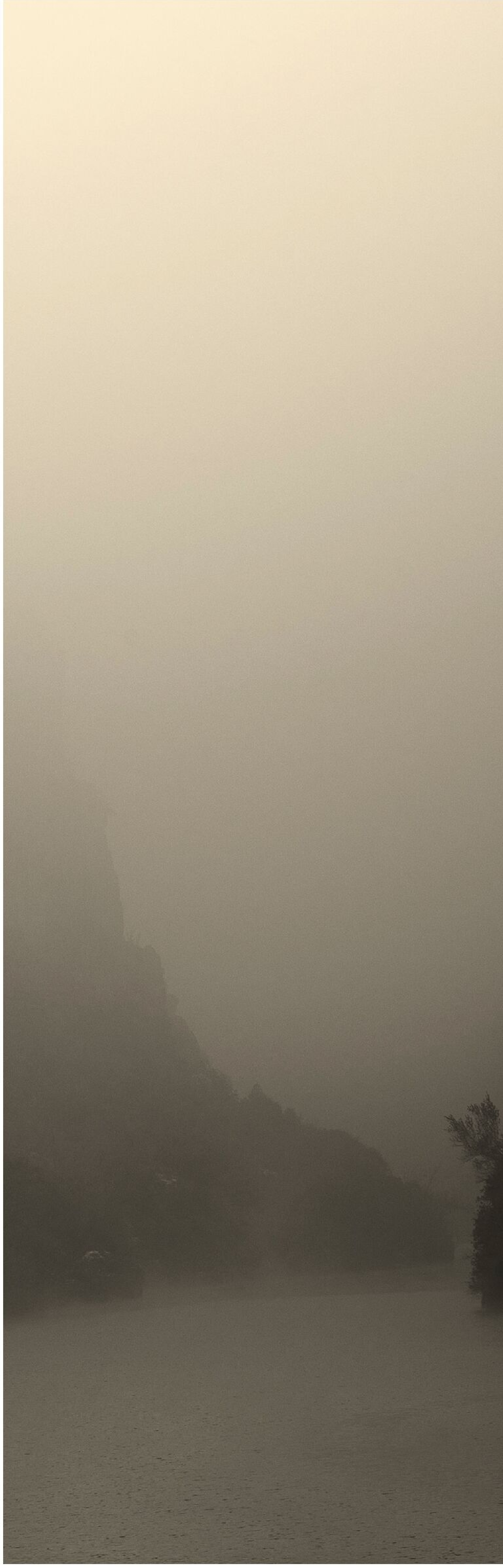
All images © Robert David Atkinson I A Silent Witness To Beauty

All images © Xavier Manrique | Antany

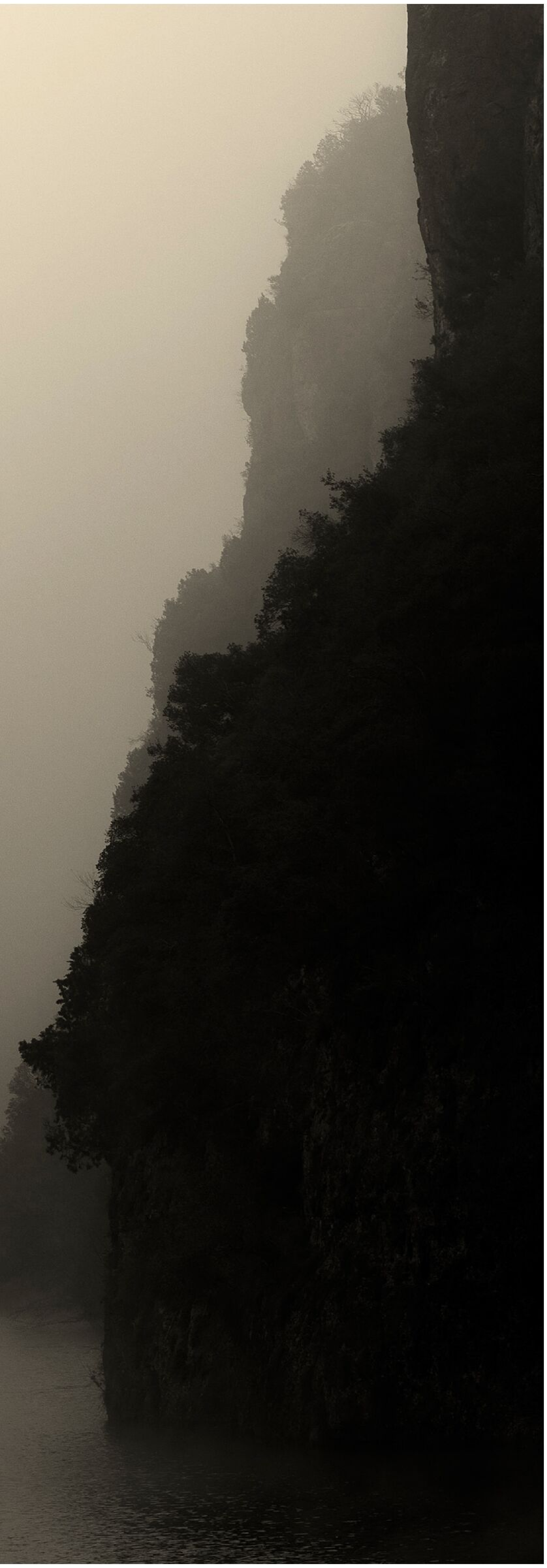
Antany

Xavier Manrique

Xavier Manrique's *Antany* is a photographic exploration of an imagined landscape shaped as much by literature and memory as by physical terrain. Developed through solitary walks in fog-laden forests and along silent rivers, the series moves beyond documentation to evoke atmosphere and emotional presence. Timeless, melancholic tones dissolve clear geography, allowing inner states to emerge through the natural world. Working with a poetic documentary sensibility, Manrique treats photography as an act of patience and attentiveness, open to ambiguity and suggestion. Antany ultimately reflects on the place as an internal experience — one that exists in fragments, intuition, and the quiet space between what is seen and what is felt.



All images All images © Xavier Manrique | Antany



“*Antany* is a photographic project born from the need to give form to an imaginary place. This space began to exist within me after reading Olga Tokarczuk, and since then, it has accompanied me like the memory of a territory I have never truly walked. For two years, I searched for this elusive place in forests, rivers, and mountains, often wrapped in fog and silence. I was not trying to document a real landscape, but to approach its shadow—the sensation that rests within it. Along this journey, the outer landscape gradually became a reflection of my inner one.

The images of *Antany*, shaped by timeless and melancholic tones, evoke memory more than geography. When fog dissolves the contours, the external world becomes permeable, allowing fragments of what lies within to surface: an intuition, an uncertain memory, a thought that fades. In this ambiguous space, the landscape becomes an emotional presence.

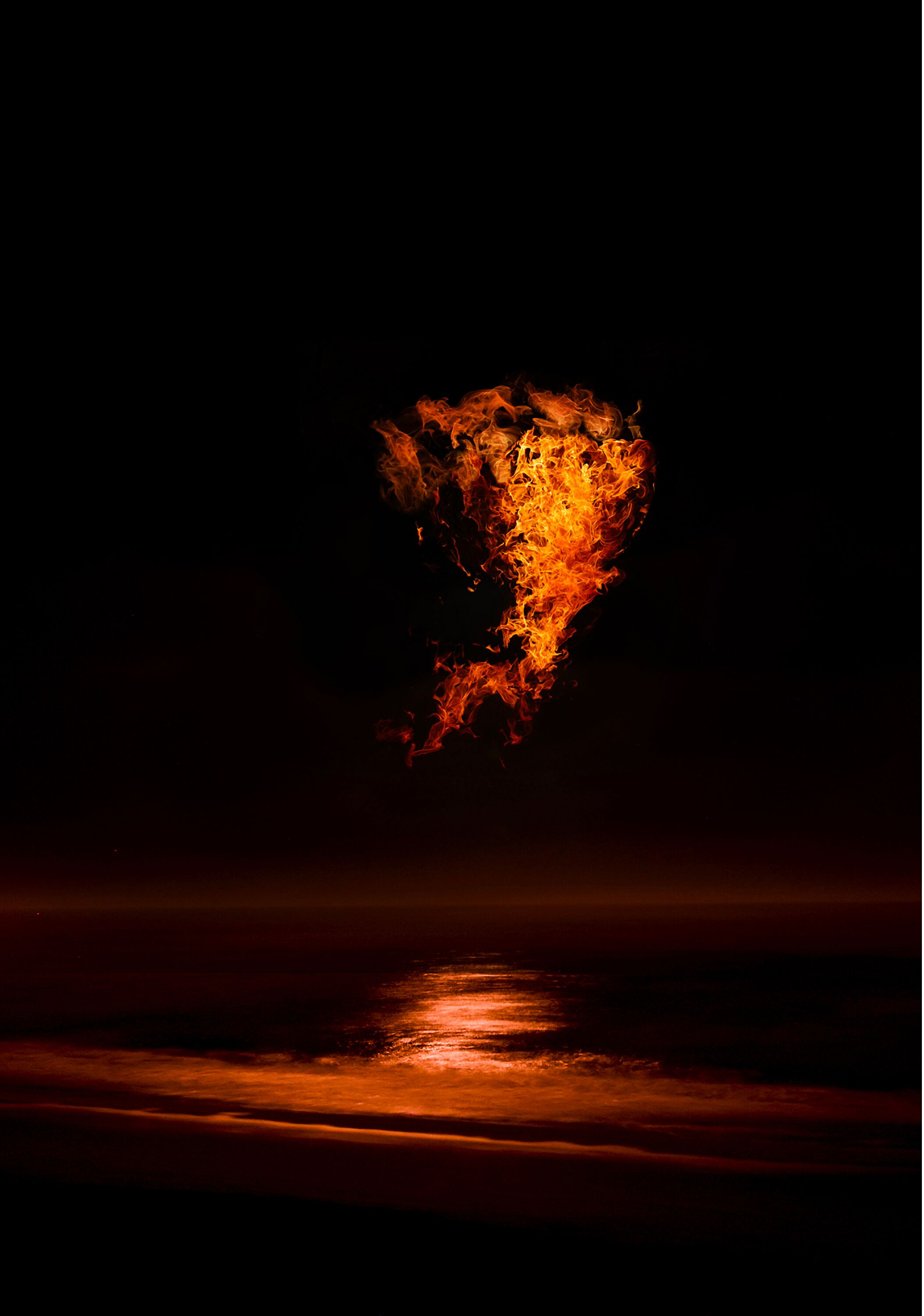
My approach is that of a poetic documentary gesture: I walk, I observe, and I wait. Sometimes, within that silence, an image appears that seems to belong to *Antany*. This process has taught me that photographing is not only about capturing what is visible, but also about welcoming what is merely suggested. For this reason, the project resonates with Barthes, Bachelard, and Stepanova—authors who understand the image as fictive memory and as an archaeology of the invisible. *Antany* is precisely that: the trace of a place that exists only when I imagine it.

About

Xavier Manrique is a Catalan photographer specialising in poetic and introspective landscape work. His practice explores the relationship between memory, perception, and nature, creating visual spaces that move between the real and the imaginary. He often works in atmospheres of fog, silence, and diffused light, where the landscape becomes an emotional territory. His projects, including Antany, Ingràvid, Interiors, and Vers l’Illa, among others, have been recognised for their sensitivity and conceptual coherence. His photography embraces a slow, contemplative gaze that transforms the external world into an inner landscape.

www.xmanrique.com

© Xavier Manrique | Antany



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Walking the Luminous Edge of Darkness

Justin Pumfrey

Encountering these images, one is drawn into a mode of attention that slows rather than resolves. Light thins to a narrow register, darkness gathers without threat, and forms hover at the edge of recognition, as if waiting to be met before they can be named. Time feels less linear here, loosening its grip as perception unfolds on quieter terms. Stillness does not register as absence but as density—attentive, porous, shaped as much by what is withheld as by what is revealed. From this perceptual threshold emerges a practice grounded in yielding rather than assertion. For Justin Pumfrey, photography begins before explanation, in a state of openness where knowing is provisional and responsiveness takes precedence over intention. The images do not press toward meaning but remain with experience itself, tracing a slow movement inward before any turn toward light, and allowing attention, rather than certainty, to guide what comes into view. “Maybe it’s the core of everything—the quiet centre you only notice when the world around you stops insisting on itself.”

For Pumfrey, the point of departure is not a concept but a condition. His work begins before language, before categorisation, in what he describes as an unnamed space of awareness. “The place I always begin from is something without a name. A kind of zero-point. It’s a dimension where the things that rise up in my awareness stand there without labels, bare and undecorated, as if language hadn’t yet touched them.” Working from this place requires relinquishing certainty. Pumfrey does not frame photography as an act of control or mastery, but as a yielding to something less easily articulated.

This openness also shapes his relationship to time. Images do not announce themselves on demand, nor do they necessarily resolve themselves immediately. “The process isn’t linear. It loops and spirals, like a dream you wake from but keep walking through anyway. We are all, in our own way, dreaming the world into being—each one of us sealed inside the borders of our own experience, drifting along the constant wave of perception whether our eyes are open or closed. And in that drifting, each soul leaves its own small trace, something continuous and unrepeatable.”

Walking with the natural world

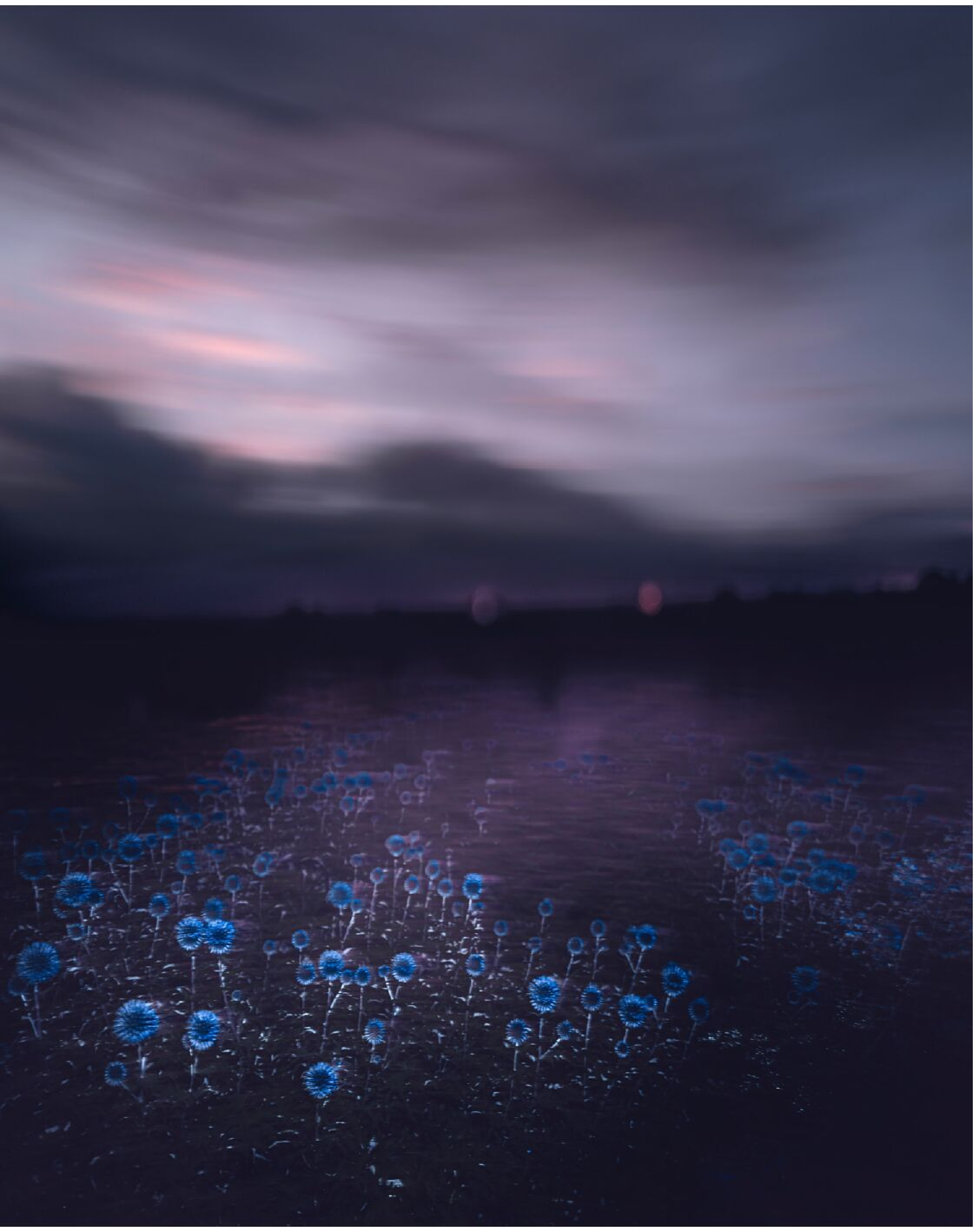
Pumfrey’s work has been shaped by extended periods spent in nature, and the natural world shifted for him from backdrop to companion. “These days, the natural world feels less like a place I visit and more like a companion I’ve fallen into step with—a kind of unexpected love affair. When the world tightened around itself in fear, I would take my camera and disappear into the woods.”

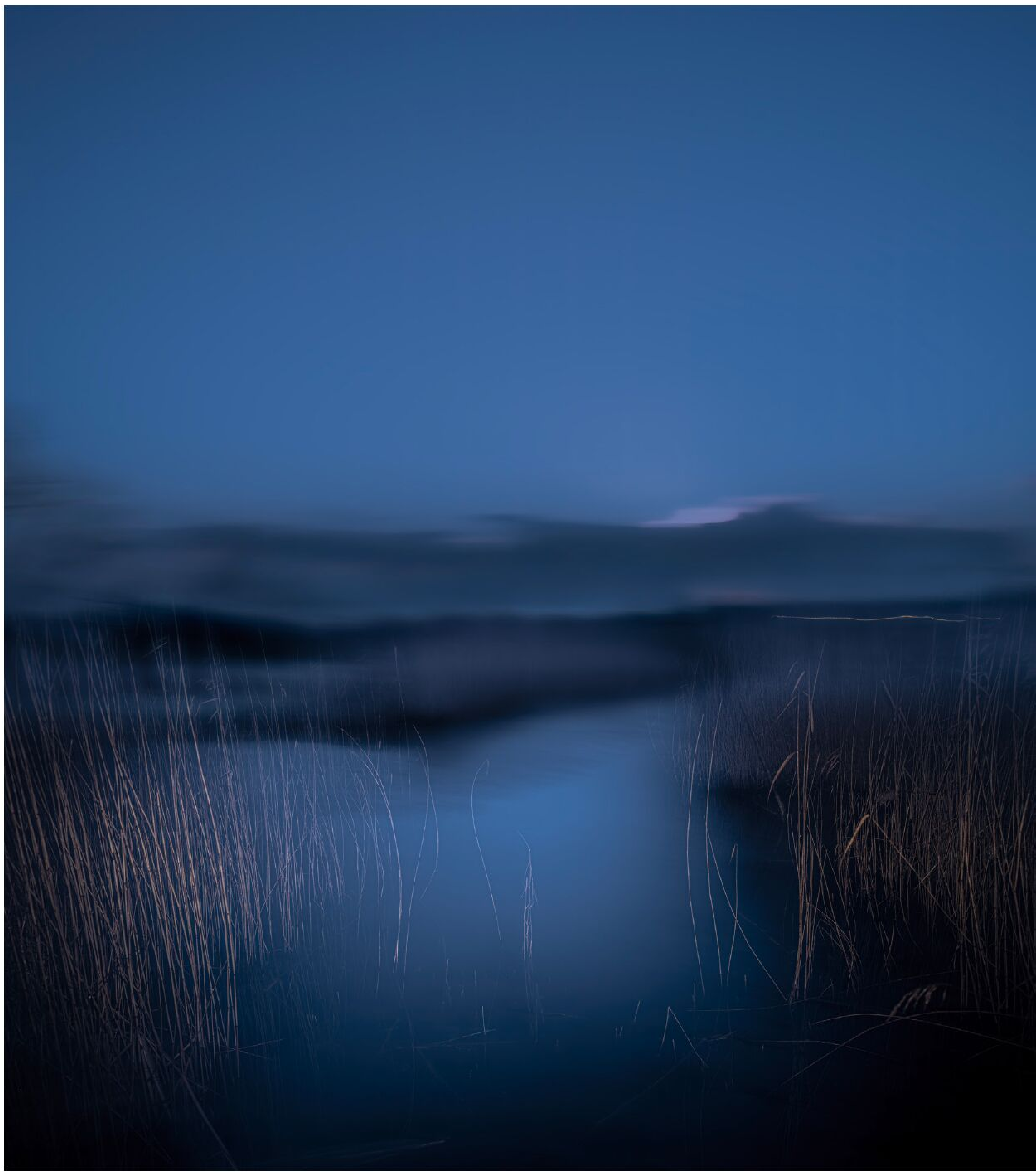
The pace of his working process slowed accordingly. Rather than seeking out subjects, he learned to wait for them. “I tried to stay close to my senses, walking without hurry, waiting for the subjects—not just to appear, but to notice me. The process reminds me of painting. I try to distil things down to whatever speaks directly to the quiet core inside me. The act itself is what matters—the simple fact of being present.”

His walks became acts of recalibration. “Out there, beyond the churn of human worry, spring was unfolding with its usual indifference. Plants pushed through soil, animals went about their practical business, and everything seemed to move to a rhythm older than language.” In this widening gap between human discourse and physical reality, he made a conscious decision to trust a quieter form of wisdom, one that does not argue but persists. The reference to poetry is telling, aligning his practice with a lineage that values attentiveness over assertion. “Somewhere in that gap I made a quiet decision—to trust what poets like E. E. Cummings seemed to understand: that nature answers the world not with arguments, but with spring. Our arrogance looks almost comical against such simplicity.”

Presence, poetry, and mysticism

Pumfrey describes his practice in terms borrowed from poetry rather than photography, not as a metaphorical flourish but as a practical orientation. “I feel my way into life itself—to catch the subtle current that moves through the natural world, the quiet emotion in things that don’t speak. Poems don’t explain; they open a door and leave you to cross the threshold alone.” His images aim to function in much the same way, offering an opening rather than a conclusion.





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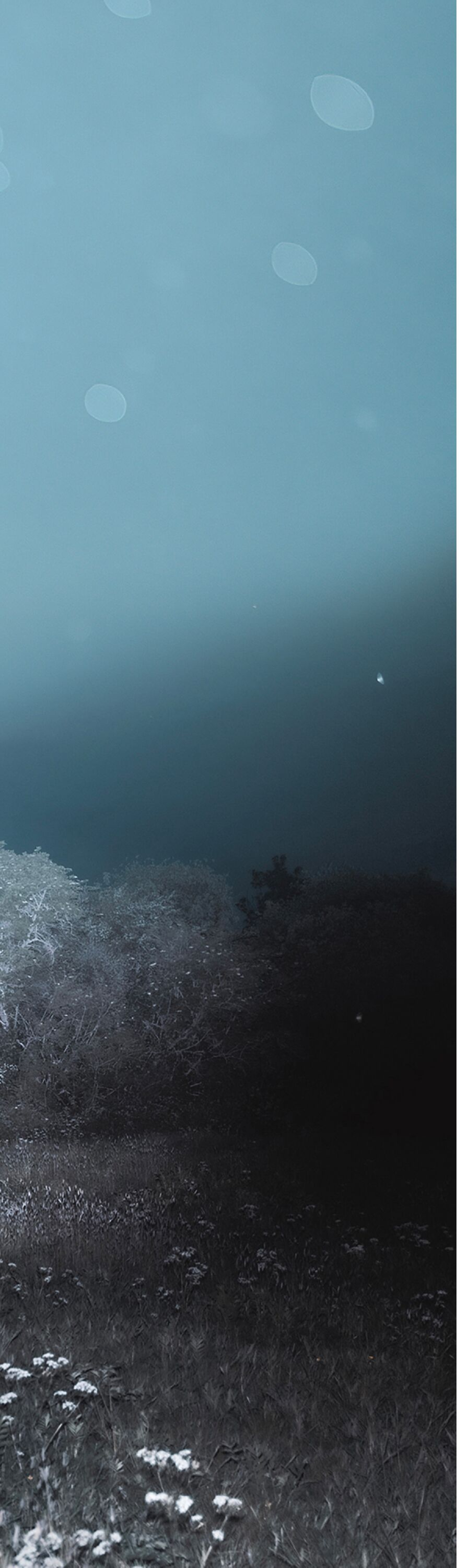

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Underlying this approach is a view of nature that dissolves the boundary between inside and outside. His sense of kinship with the material world is grounded in an acceptance of mortality and continuity. “Nature inspires me not only because it exists outside—trees, stones, birds, wind—but because it exists inside. I’m made of the same raw material. Earth shaped me, and someday it will take me back. That thought doesn’t frighten me; it steadies me. Humans are complicated creatures, tangled in our emotions and old thoughts, tied to the machinery of the cultures we inherit. Nature, by contrast, just goes on being itself. It doesn’t choose sides, doesn’t scheme or regret. It simply is.” For Pumfrey, life itself is understood as an animating presence rather than a concept to be explained. “When I speak of life, I mean that animating pulse inside all things—the force that lets a blade of grass push through a sidewalk and a cloud drift over a mountain. Moving toward that kind of simplicity feels like walking into the territory of mystics, where ordinary logic loses its footing and something quieter begins to guide you.”

Darkness as a passage

Among the recurring motifs in Pumfrey’s work, darkness occupies a central and carefully differentiated place. He speaks of two distinct forms, each carrying its own emotional and symbolic weight. “In both images and words, I’ve come to recognise two very different kinds of darkness. The first is the one we all know too well—shadowed, unsettled, shaped by the unconscious. But the second kind is something else entirely. A luminous darkness—thick, velvety, almost tender in the way it surrounds you. You can’t enter it unless you’ve already faced the first darkness with whatever courage and curiosity you can muster. Only then does it unfold—calm, still, strangely full of wonder.”

Pumfrey understands his work as pointing towards this second darkness, not as a destination but as a process. “When we step into the unknown, the unconscious begins to surface, and what once frightened us reveals itself as something intimate, unexpected, sometimes even joyful. When I take photographs, I feel as if I’m walking through that alchemical corridor—letting the unseen rise up, allowing something inside me to shift. Because while the mystic turns inward, down into the quiet depths, that same gaze eventually circles back to show us something astonishing: that we, too, are shaped from pieces of the sun.”

Emotion and growth

Although emotion is central to Pumfrey’s images, it is approached obliquely. “I’m drawn to emotion not for its drama, but for the strange power it gives off—like a tone vibrating just beneath the surface of things.” He understands fear and joy not as opposites but as frequencies, capable of being held together within a single frame, allowing the image to suggest transformation rather than fixation. “When I make an image holding the weight of fear, I always try to weave in a second note—something calmer, like peace. Maybe it’s because my life and my work have always leaned toward transmutation, the slow turning of the lower into the higher. Growth seems to move in that direction, like a plant stretching toward the sun without quite knowing why.”

This impulse towards transmutation reflects a broader understanding of growth as an inward process rather than an outward display. The images offer spaces in which the viewer may recognise aspects of their own inner weather. “The images I make are more than images. They’re contemplations—small mirrors that let me peer into the shifting weather of the inner world.”

Turning towards the light

In recent work, Pumfrey’s attention has been drawn to the liminal interval between night and day, a fragile seam that carries a sense of familiarity and return. This threshold feels like a homecoming to something essential yet easily overlooked, a space where darkness loosens its hold without entirely giving way to light. Reflecting on earlier phases of his practice, he recognises a clear shift. “The work I made before was different. It circled around the sadness of being caught inside darkness, the pain of not knowing how to step beyond it.

> “When I make an image holding the weight of fear, I always try to weave in a second note—something calmer, like peace.

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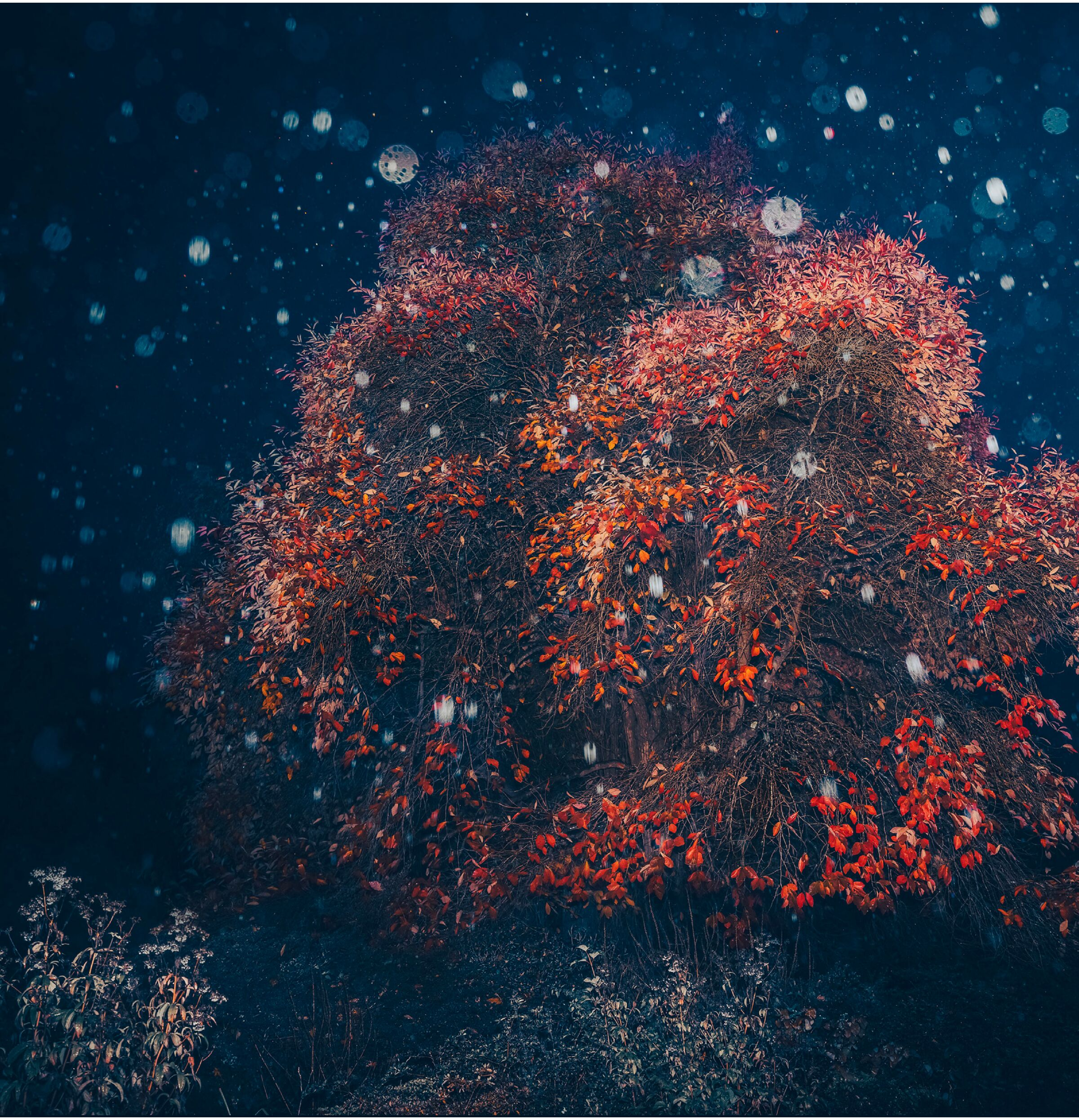

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But now I sense another phase approaching, something gentler and more spacious. A slow turning toward the light, and perhaps—if I'm patient—standing in it more and more fully." The movement is neither abrupt nor declarative, but gradual, shaped by attentiveness rather than intention.

This orientation is closely tied to his understanding of connection, which he treats as incidental rather than pursued. "If we manage to hold a steady measure of self-love—calm, unshowy—then connection with others happens on its own." His primary responsibility remains inward, guided by a need for honesty rather than affirmation. "My only intention is to stay aligned with whatever inner rhythm keeps me honest—to find that faint resonance that tells me I'm still myself."

When evaluating the work, he returns to it quietly, listening rather than judging. "When the work is finally in front of me, I study it in the same way I might listen to a far-off sound at night. If something in it reaches out and touches me, then I know it's true in the only way that matters." Any shared response is received as a gift rather than a goal. "And if someone else feels that same vibration—well, that's just a small bonus life tosses in, like finding an extra coin in an old coat pocket."

Making The Moon

This evolution is currently finding form in a forthcoming book, Making The Moon, which continues to explore these themes with the same restraint and attentiveness that characterise his photographic practice. As with the images themselves, the work does not seek to explain its own meaning. Instead, it invites the viewer to pause, to stand quietly within the frame, and to feel—if only briefly—the subtle alignment between inner and outer worlds.

About

Justin Pumfrey is a London-based photographer whose work is rooted in a lifelong inquiry into perception, presence and the mystery of being. He studied poetry at Oxford and has worked extensively within various spiritual traditions, experiences that continue to inform his visual practice. His photography seeks to return the ordinary to its inherent sense of wonder, grounded in an attitude of openness and receptivity.

For Pumfrey, photography functions as a conduit rather than a means of control: a practice of seeing beyond concepts and habitual distinctions, and an invitation into the ineffable. Much of the work presented here has been created since 2020, when an intensified engagement with the natural world, particularly plant life, became a source of renewal and continuity. Alongside this personal body of work, he has maintained a successful international career in editorial and advertising photography, receiving numerous awards, including first place at the 2023 Fine Art Photography Awards and Silver at the 2023 Prix de la Photographie Paris (PX3).

www.justinpumfrey.com

© Justin Pumfrey | Noumenal

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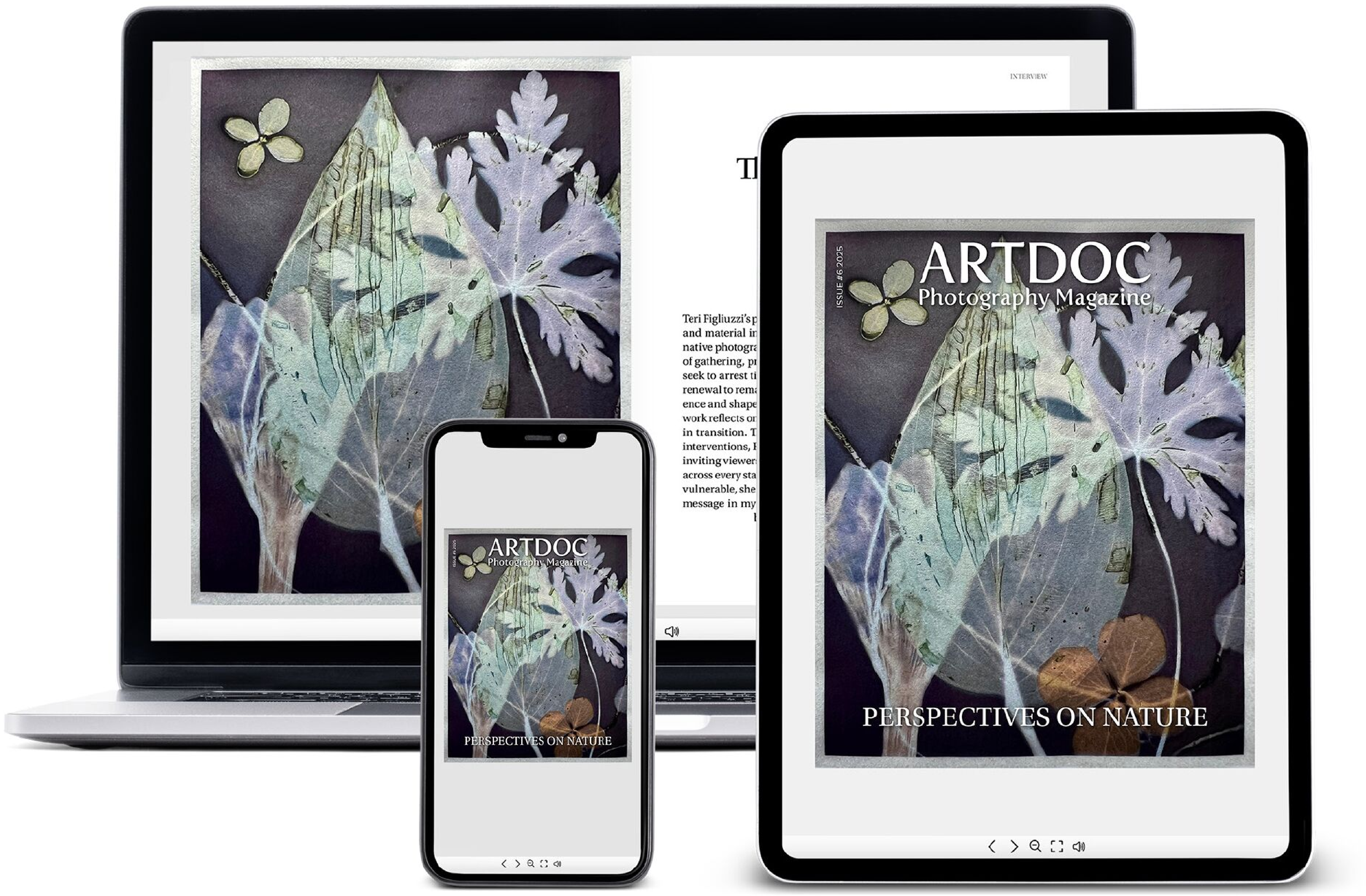
- Justin Pumfrey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